NUMBER 20 $1.50

# THE SPACE GAMER

FOR CREATIVE ADVENTURES

in this issue:

SCALING OLYMPICA

TARTARS & MARTYRS

MORE RULES FOR ICE WAR

STARSHIPS & SPACEMEN
Design notes

# THE SPACE GAMER

FOR CREATIVE ADVENTURES


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THE LAST WORD. . . .

This TSG should slide in under the door to complete all six issues for 1978. We just made it, barely. Despite an increased work load, the TSG staff hopes to make up that lost time in 1979. No promises you understand, but remember, we want to catch up as much as you would like us to.

Next issue will contain an eye-opening veiw of the gaming industry from a very well-known designer and producer of the most popular role-playing game in history. Look for it soon. TSG 21 should start your year off with a bang.

Back issues are in good supply for Numbers 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. I can't stress enough that you complete your run now, while the issues are available. When these are gone, there will be no more. First come, first served (as usual).

STICKS & STONES just arrived from the printer, and it looks like a real winner! It has so many things going for it that I can't really point out a single feature above another. Buy it, and give yourself a treat.

TSG's ever growing subscribers tell us we are doing something right, but we would still like to hear from readers about the things that concern them. Drop me a line, we will make this magazine be what the readers (family) of TSG want.

Note that this issue carries our yearly Feedback section. Rip it out carefully, or copy it all and send in your response. We can't over emphasize how important this is to us. Keep in mind that the Feedback is the most important way you can affect what Metagaming does with its resources. We want to give you, the science fiction gamer, what he/she wants and soon. Help us help you. We want to continue to provide you with interesting, entertaining, and stimulating ideas for your leisure time. Enjoyment is the one word we have written on the walls here.

. . . . .C.B. Ostrander


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# WHERE WE'RE GOING

Pass It On. . . . .

Charles Roberts founder of THE AVALON HILL CO., will always hold a high place in my regard. I remember finding my first wargame, a shelf worn Tactics II, in an Austin discount house at age fourteen. Roberts had designed and published the game, a fact unknown to me for another decade. That game affected me as much as Robert Heinlein's novels. Wargames and Heinlein can have a big impact on a scrubby kid with no money and a wild imagination.

In recent months I've come to realize MicroGames are passing on that same awakening to a younger generation. The letters we get from low-teens and pre-teens attest to the phenomena. Those letters bring back memories. You can see quick young minds stretching and reaching. Whether it's MELEE/WIZARD, OGRE, WARPWAR, CHITIN:I or others, the enthusiasm is there.

These kids are playing for fun, as I did. They've been provided a vehicle and structure for stimulating their imagination. The joy of discovery in playing has fired their thoughts. It will be years before they know how much their reading comprehension, vocabulary, computational, spatial, economic, and logical skills were enhanced by game fun.

I can't ever repay Charles Roberts for Tactics II and what followed. You can say "thanks to a prior generation; you can't repay. But, the MicroGames can "pass it on". We can strive to make the Micros as widely available as possible. At $2.95, every kid who gets curious can have a shot at gaming. Some will be unaffected. A big minority will get an experience that can't be valued in currency. And, in their time, many of them will also pass it on.

Hindsight. . . . .

The second annual science fiction and fantasy gaming survey is in this issue. There are few changes from the last survey format. Games, companies, magazines and game classes are all rated. The survey is on a sheet in the center of the issue for easy removal and mailing.

Only one entirely new company, Dimension Six, Inc,. joins the list. Attack Wargaming has been dropped and may no longer be active. Game Time Games and Battleline are both part of Heritage Models. Conflict Games, which produced Imperium, was erroneously identified as Game Designer's Workshop last survey.

Forty-four games were rated last survey. Five games were dropped and twenty-eight new ones added. Six of the new titles are Metagaming MicroGames. During 1978 GODSFIRE and STELLAR CONQUEST went out of print temporarily, release in boxes is due in March, while MONSTERS! MONSTERS! will be dropped effective January 1, 1979. Metagaming accounts for about 20% of science fiction titles published by professional companies.

As 1978 comes to an end it's time for some hind sight. At the start of the year we'd hoped for another tripling in sales. What we're going to get is about 2.2 times our 1977 sales. That's good news and bad news. The bad news is we missed a goal that was reasonable. The good news is we doubled sales without getting a single new product line off the ground. We wanted to introduce boxed games, miniatures, and computer games in early 1978. The best we'll manage is some miniatures produced under license in December, 1978 and boxed STELLAR CONQUEST and GODSFIRE by March 1979. THE SPACE GAMER circulation has grown to over 6,000 paid buyers. That's short of the 8,000 we wanted by year end, but up 60%.

It seems strange to look at a year of double sales as a flop. Our expectations were much higher. It doesn't help to know that there has been a recession brewing most of the year. Next year will be worse economically. Yet, we expect to shoot for triple sales again. That's not being perpetual optimist either. If we do our job right you'll see more new products and services from Metagaming.

PROJECTS. . . . .

Microtures! The first packages of Metagaming's Microtures (trademark applied for) will be available by the time you read this. The first releases will be 15mm fantasy figures for THE FANTASY TRIP. Ogre MkV vehicles will also be ready soon.

The Microtures are being produced under license by Martian Metals, another Texas gaming firm. Forest Brown, head of Martian Metals, has worked long and hard on this project and has achieved some truly quality work. You'll be seeing more Microture releases for various Metagaming games as 1979 progresses.

The only sad note is a probable lawsuit over our use of "Microtures." G.H.Q., a Minneapolis firm, makes a line of tanks called Microarmor and ships called Micronauts. They had already had their law firm contact us about our use of MicroGames. Our feeling is that there is no confusion with out use of MicroGames, Microquests,and Microtures.

THE FANTASY TRIP: In The Labyrinth is still progressing apace. It will hopefully be released as a boxed game two to four months after STELLAR CONQUEST and GODSFIRE are out in boxes. There will be about a ten week gap in Micro production to allow for the huge budget bite of boxes. The next Micros after STICKS & STONES will probably be a Fantasy Trip Microquest and a GODSFIRE tactical module by Lynn Willis.

The computer game project may enter playtesting in mid '79. The conversion of our most critical paperwork to computer is progressing. Wholesale accounts now get computerized invoices. Much of the wholesale accounting and statistics are also computerized.

Programming done so far has reduced estimates of development time on METASTAR 80 once programming starts. When you know how to use our system, things can move rapidly. The learning curve is fairly steep. Also, I'm progressively more pleased with a "hobbyist" system. Flexibility is limited but fully adequate for rather complex tasks. The slowest processing is read/write time to the diskettes. The plan is to add a cartridge type fast disk soon after the games begin to run to reduce processing time significantly.

The bad side of the computer is that programming is so much fun a few games in development have lagged. This isn't good but necessary. The computer is the absolute key to handling future growth. If it doesn't do it's work growth will be slowed to a stop in the near future.

. . . . .Howard Thompson

THE FANTASY TRIP Microtures are made for use with Metagaming's THE FANTASY TRIP game system. Each package of Microtures is an assortment of quality metal fantasy figures. These figures are used to represent the heroes, heroines, fighters, wizards, sentients, monsters and animals from THE FANTASY TRIP.

THE FANTASY TRIP Microtures are supplied with optional hex bases. The hex bases are compatible with the facing and movement requirements of THE FANTASY TRIP combat system. When glued to the hex bases the figures are ready for fantasy adventure.

Metagaming already has several games published in THE FANTASY TRIP series.

THE FANTASY TRIP: MELEE $2.95 - man to man combat

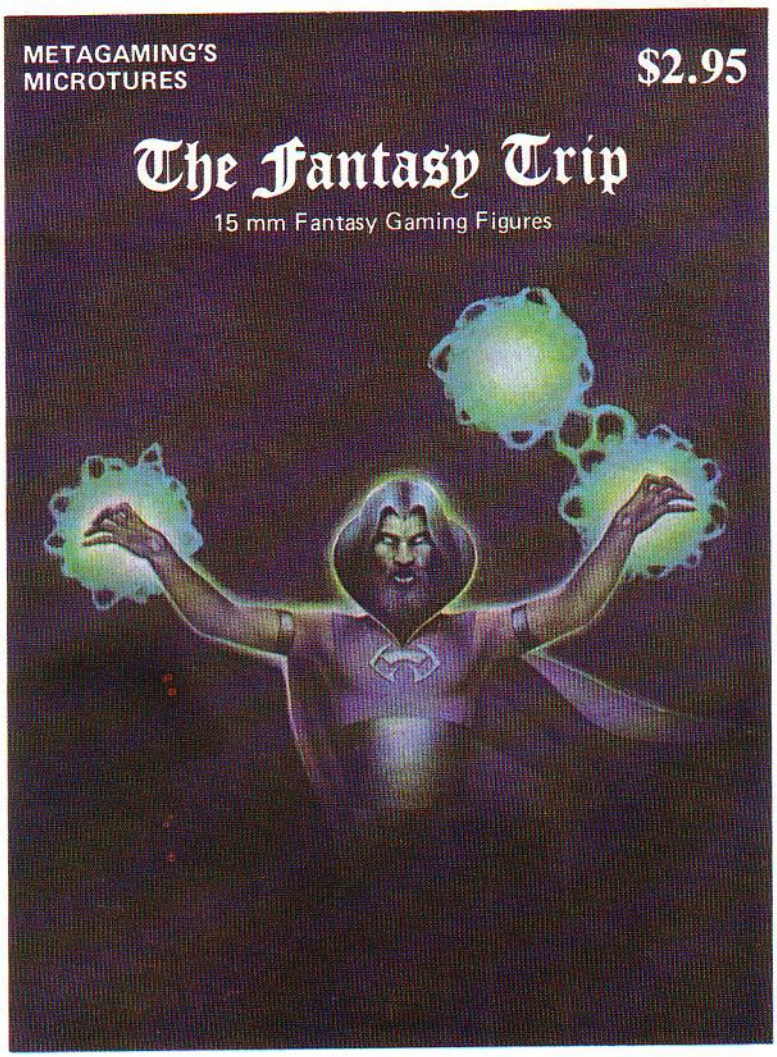
THE FANTASY TRIP: WIZARD $3.95 - magical combat

THE FANTASY TRIP: DEATH TEST $2.95 - an adventure

To be published in the near future are the Game Master's rule module for adventure campaigns.

THE FANTASY TRIP: IN THE LABYRINTH

While intended for use with THE FANTASY TRIP these Microtures are suitable for use with any fantasy game that uses figures. They are also useful, without bases, on terrain boards as fantasy armies.




| | |
|---|---|
| TFT 1 | Heroes & Heroines |
| TFT 2 | Heroes & Magic users |
| TFT 3 | The Dwarves |
| TFT 4 | Elves |
| TFT 5 | Labyrinth Dwellers (giant,ogre,bear,wolves,Gargoyles) |
| TFT 6 | Orcs no.1 - 6 swordsmen,6 pole axe |
| TFT 7 | Hobgoblins no.1 - 6 swordsmen, 6 spears |
| TFT 8 | One-hex dragon |
| TFT 9 | Orcs no.2 - Bows & Crossbows |
| TFT 10 | Hobgoblins no.2 - 6 bows, 6 axes |

**ORDER CONDITIONS**

Due to the mailing weight of these Mircoture packages, they must be ordered subject to the following conditions:

1.) Three Microture packages or more is the minimum order. Orders for only one or two Microture packages will be returned.

2.) A postage and handling fee of $1.00 per order must accompany each order for Microtures.

3.) Subscribers to THE SPACE GAMER are exempt from the $1.00 postage and handling fee.

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# SCALING A MOUNTAIN

*by*

## EDWARD C. COOPER

OLYMPICA: for those of us who were patiently waiting, it was no disappointment.

OLYMPICA *moves.*

The added complexity displayed over other Micros in both rules and play tactics becomes increasingly apparent as one begins the painstaking task of familiarization. Though the simulation actually occurs on a fourteen by eight inch board, play gives the *feel* of a much larger game.

. . . U.N. troops drop in and are rolling from landfall racing against a deadline and Web reinforcements converging from distant areas turn after turn. Web infantry reacts in an attempt to delay the downed U.N. infantry's advance, hoping to give the entire Mars Web time to link up and focus on the Nix Olympica Region. . .

. . . The sharp sizzling howl of Laser Tanks and Web Strongpoints engaging resonates only a muffled hum in the thin atmosphere. Weapons blaze - men fall: precious seconds tick away. An angry sky rains U.N. men and equipment, the blood of the dying lost in a sea of shifting red sands. . .

**INITIAL SET UP**

OLYMPICA is not an easy game to win, for either side. Both players are faced with several battle characteristics unique in the other, some their forces are painfully unable to handle. The delicate balance of power found in this diversity between the Web and U.N. units, must be skillfully interwoven to achieve success.

Game mechanics force swift and *decisive* combat-- one slip can mean defeat. There is simply no time for halfway combat measures, or adaptation and revision as play progresses. The time constraint of eight turns compels a set-up integrated with a precisely executed plan of action.

Players should grow accustomed to the distinct difference found between OLYMPICA and other Micros-- *the set up counts!*

Concurrently, the Web set-up directly effects the outcome of this player's game. Shabby planning here always ends in disaster. Besides proper unit positioning, there are two other important items required for a successful defense: 1) good use of the terrain -- as a natural barrier, and to both exploit U.N. weaknesses and press Web unit advantages. . . 2) Understand what is really required for Web Victory-- know the "type" of action you're fighting.

In other words, a tight, but flexible defense stands the best chance of delaying the U.N.'s advance and resulting in a Web Victory.

Most war buffs should be familiar with the famous Carthaginian General named Hannibal. He won battle after battle against the Romans in the 2nd Punic War by using the Roman's own superiority of numbers against themselves. The Roman skirmish line was so long, the right half couldn't see what the left half was doing and vice versa. Hannibal would have his center troops engage the Roman's while slowly retreating. This maneuver lured the unsuspecting Romans into a half circle of steel that Hannibal's horse cavalry suddenly closed on the other side by outflanking the advancing mass from Rome. Caught from behind, the Romans tried to turn, resulting in utter chaos. Confusion, then panic set in-- resulting in men running, and the inevitable wholesale slaughter of the Roman troops.

Web players, especially those readily familiar with Hannibal, can you see the similarity in battle conditions? . . . the numerical numbers of the U.N. versus your tight defense and reinforcements which enter the game *behind* the U.N.

A tribute to the designer, the rules structure of OLYMPICA manages to compliment the flavor of the raid scenario portrayed. Such a scenario gives the U.N. the advantage of surprise and initial strength. . . but against this works the time factor, and a lack of terrain and target knowledge. It is crucial the Web player realizes the U.N. player can saturate any area of the gameboard-- at any time. This can and will hurt the Web player. Try and fight it, defeat will be your reward. Accept it and work around it, victory can be reached. For the Web player to get strung out is tantamount to a self-imposed death sentence. A tight but flexible defense.

This leads to the third concept required for victory-- and probably the most important of the three for the Web player to grasp-- *Web forces are fighting a DELAYING action only.*

Understand the victory conditions. Don't try and eject the U.N. off the gameboard. This is not required for victory, and the rules structure is not designed to support such an attempt. Under the imagination that created the scenario, if the Web Generator in question is not captured by the end of the eighth turn, the U.N. will have to leave Mars *altogether* because the Web will re-link.

Counterattack to delay the U.N.'s advance past these eight turns only, aiming for weak spots in a drop, or after

the landing forces have spread out. These are the two areas wherein a U.N. player will make the most mistakes. And every loss will make itself felt to the U.N. player, rest assured.

Fighting a delaying action sometimes means attacking at less than favorable odds-- OLYMPICA is no exception-- but the vital thing is to stop the U.N. advance. By engaging the U.N. player properly, screening his force, the U.N. either has to go around you, or over you before continuing up the Caldera; both choices gobble up the time.

Use the clock, Web players. It is your most loved ally. Even when you are losing unit after unit, if it's taking time, you're actually winning.

There are two distinct areas of operation the Web defense can be divided into-- the Central Defense Ring, and the use of reinforcements appearing at the map edges.

The mainstay of the central defense ring is the Web Strongpoint (SP). Because it is a matter of individual judgment versus U.N. movement patterns, specifics cannot be detailed concerning when it is best to uncover the SP for use. As a general rule, however, they should be uncovered in a situation when their firepower will be maximized in concert attacks against tanks or dangerously close U.N. infantry. Remember, U.N. drops after the initial turn cannot move until the turn after they are dropped. As the Web player has first fire combat advantage, two SPs and perhaps some infantry can give 2-1 or 3-1 combats odds against a tank-- very favorable for eliminating it before it can return fire.

One way to "set up the tank" in this manner so the infantry can surround it in conjunction with SP fire, is to compel it toward the Web infantry (rule 19.2), out of its own U.N. infantry screen. Web infantry should be used in support of SP attacks on tanks or lifters, and to delay U.N. infantry on a one-to-one basis.

Suppose the Web player manages to "set-up" two U.N. tanks for concert attacks by SPs and infantry. The Web player must uncover four of his five SPs. Horrible?-- not really. At 3-1 odds, the Web player has four out of six chances for good results, five out of six for some adverse effect, and only one out of six chance unfavorable result-- an exchange.

Let's use the odds and say the two tanks are destroyed. Now the valid question becomes: the position of four SPs is known, can the remaining four Laser Tanks gang up on them?

Answer, not effectively. It is probable the U.N. will not be able to bring any infantry to bear in a return attack that same turn. (assuming a smart Web player who caught the tanks at extreme range, and blocked the way to his own SPs with Web infantry should a U.N. unit be near) This means only the Laser Tanks can engage. It would take 3 Laser Tanks to get 2-1 odds on an SP, and 4 Laser Tanks to get 3-1 odds. The U.N. player can't afford to do this. The Web player would lose an SP, but all three or four remaining Laser Tanks would then be within range of yet another SP barrage.

The Laser Tanks are simply too important to the U.N. player to risk all of them in such a manner. They are more effectively used to stand off and use against Web infantry in the U.N.'s must effort to gain dominance of the ground situation. Only after this is accomplished can they exchange fire actively against the SPs.

Such an ambush tactic as was mentioned is bound to come early in play. The example is possible--not easy-- it requires skilled maneuvering, and it also serves to illustrate proper uncovery time.

Under the substitution of forces rule, 5.4, the Web player-- in this player's opinion-- is better off to delete two infantry and two tunnels (leaving four fixed-placement and two optional-placement tunnels) and add one Strongpoint and one dummy counter. This is because there will be Web infantry reinforcements, the obvious tactical advantages gained by a fifth SP, and there are also several detrimental aspects Tunnels have for the Web player. The later reason will see light in the Tunnels section.

Optional rule 16.2, Defensive Umbrellas, can be used to the advantage of both sides and should be used to promote realism.

It does slightly favor the Web player in the sense the Web player's SPs are likely to be concentrated in one area (whereas lasar tank umbrellas may be spread out); this umbrella will help further tighten the wall the defending Web infantry forms around the SPs and Web Generator, by slowing down U.N. breakthroughs. Such an umbrella also serves to force the U.N. player to concentrate his forces *to break through,* but within range of a counterattack.

The result is a major advantage for the Web player. Though the U.N. can start out spread wide, it must tend to concentrate these forces (within SP range) on the attack to punch out a hole in the Defense Ring and obtain decisive results. The U.N. has no time to gamble on even combat odds.

The Web player doesn't have to "win" any engagement-- only engage. Web SP counterattacks will thus hurt the U.N. efforts at breakthrough badly. It is here U.N. players must drop additional units correctly-- or lose. But remember, U.N. units are not replaced. . .

One thing the Web player should *not* do is try and "slug it out" or assume the active offensive. The U.N. will always have overwhelming mobility because of the Lifters.

As the U.N. player can drop more units in at any time, better the Web player keep the central defense ring intact, and maintain an equally distributed defense between infantry and Strongpoints, using terrain and tunnels to further strengthen desired areas.

Offensive maneuvers tend to spread out the attack forces. Holes left by such a Web offensive will be ruthlessly exploited by a hungry U.N.. If the central defense ring infantry is moved away, the protective umbrella is weakened, and it is entirely possible the U.N. can overload the SPs, now without the logistical support provided by the infantry.

The reinforcements coming in from either side of the gameboard are the forces with whom to assume the offensive with. They are a sufficient force the U.N. player cannot ignore. And unless a Web player makes the traditional "big mistake," many of these forces will have the chance of actively engage the U.N. forces before the Web Generator can be reached.

There is one basic objective to consider in reinforcement use. The U.N. player has probably been holding back drops in anticipation of Web reinforcements appearing-- a plus for the Web to start-- make him keep holding back drops if at all possible. The U.N. player may commit his entire force to the ground a few turns into the game, and then try and use his Lifters to shuttle troops out to combat Web reinforcements approaching his tank positions.

If the U.N. player elects this method over holding drops, fine by the Web. The U.N. will be forced to sacrifice mobility around the mountain top area, and mobility is the U.N.'s best weapon in its attempt to crack that ring.

Try to force the U.N. player into slowing his attack on the central defense ring. It buys time. The effective use of Web reinforcements to take the pressure of the Ring is just as crucial as the set-up of the Ring itself.

**SCENARIO**

To better illustrate the situation, the following "workshop" set-up is presented:

**Web Generator:** 1613
**Strongpoints:** 1512, 1714, 1614, 1713, 1513

**Dummy Markers:** 1412, 1413, 1514, 1615, 1715

**Troops:** 1612, 1411, 1511, 1009, 1010, 2020, 2120, 1717, 1718, 1616, 1516, 1416, 1316, 1014, 0914

No doubt, after all explanations for such a set up are given, the room for improvement might be evident to some-- I beg indulgence of these.

Looking first at the central defense ring's core, though the ring of SPs may seem the most obvious defense (and then again perhaps not?) it is still the best one-in this instance.

Why? There are three primary reasons.

1) Knowing where an objective is-- the SPs-- and taking that objective do not necessarily follow hand in hand. They can be time and space apart.
2) The SPs must be revealed eventually. Holes between them will be fiercely contended by the U.N. player seeking a breakthrough.
3) While normally, this conservative type defense would not be combat effective given time, time is just what the U.N. player does not have. For the delaying action the Web Player is fighting-- the defense works well.

If some are still worried about the initial secrecy in regards to the tank ambush tactic mentioned earlier, you still have a respectable element of uncertainty the U.N. player must contend with.

Quickly turn face down the Web Generator, the five SPs, five dummies, and three infantry. Several things become apparent that you can see with your eyes. Mention does not need to be made further here.

The results produce a small, but significant zone of uncertainty within a zone of uncertainty. If you suspect a Web defense ringed with SPs, as you assume the U.N. role, there are still four different hexes the generator could be in and still fit this requirement.

But yet, you search your mythical opponents eyes. Has such a ring really been set up? Again you scan the face down circle. Has it been left partially defended purposely, or perhaps the Web Generator placed on the fringe because that's where you'd expect it *not* to be? The hex possibilities multiply and explode. And in the back of the mind remember. . . eight turns.

Pressure is a personal human element that can cause the U.N. player to make mistakes. It's effect on play should not be underestimated.

As for the infantry forming a defensive line across the peninsula of flat land between the two inclines fronting Olympus Mons from a Southeasternly approach: this area is the easiest line of attack. The Web infantry here serves two functions. First, it serves as a screen for delay, and to support SP attacks. It retreats slowly using a tactic mentioned earlier.

The other simple function is to cut off the mountain top, adding a fourth artificial line to the other, natural three, completing the square. While there is room for the U.N. to drop on the mountain behind this line, the U.N. might be hesitant to do so. Such units would be totally cut off from friendly forces, and additional, unplanned drops might be necessary to bale the initial drop out. The U.N. strategy dictates that drops must be placed carefully. Were such an action pursued, the risk is run of committing more forces than can be afforded. The whole U.N. operation bogs down until those forces can disengage and be re-aligned properly.

Then, there is the cliff formation to the south. If the Web Generator does happen to be on the fringe there, the movement compulsion the Web Generator produces could make life a steep cliff to climb for the U.N. Rule 10.4.2 shows combat strengths halved in cliff hexes, guaranteeing any units caught there a swift death at the hands of ranged infantry and SP attacks.

Another alternative placement for the four Web infantry units at hexes 1316, 1416, 1516, and 1616 is to space them along the mountain top so no three hexes in a drop pattern shape will be open-- i.e. spaces 1211, 1313, 1415, 1516-- causing close assaults to take place if the U.N. drops in to chat.

The two sets of two infantry units found at 0914, 1015, and 2020, 2120 are again placed so as to delay an immediate U.N. move up the turn after dropping. These units, in effect, take away a safe landing for the U.N. in these areas unless drops are made farther out. Both pair of units also provide additional support to the fixed tunnel emplacements the U.N. will desperately try to get his hands on.

Note again the line of infantry spaced across the entrance to the caldera can break off in support of these back up units *if necessary* and in turn support them. Now, count the distance from the near SPs to the two pair of outlying infantry.

Make sure the fixed tunnel emplacements *are occupied* on set-up, and that use of the natural terrain for defense is used whenever possible. Terrain can be the deciding factor in this game.

With the Web Generator located in hex 1613, any drops attempted on its weak side, the north face, are going to be partly within range of the two hex limit (unless dropped on the cliffs) and can thus be compelled there in any event.

U.N. units dropped in this area would be up against heavy odds in the way of SP fire combined with elements of the natural terrain. The going would be anything but fast, and most likely costly as well.

Web players, keep the infantry in tight on the weak side. Remember, the heavy infantry landed must stop in the intervening incline hexes after it moves off the cliffs-- assuming survival-- and the SPs again have a chance to fire (at 3-1 odds against infantry) and all the results are deadly.

A dust result halves combat strength and the unit cannot move the next turn. A DR2 result puts the U.N. back on the cliffs. Should the U.N. somehow manage to emerge from slaughter alley, rule 16.2, defensive umbrellas, will again present the U.N. with problems-- thus the reason for not moving the infantry out to confront the U.N. and using SPs instead.

Returning a last time to our scenario, there is one major weakness left so intentionally. Take a few seconds and try to spot it. In first setting up the scenario, I had also over looked this area, then decided to use it as an example. Why all the emphasis on set-up? Because it takes just one goof like the one you are about to see to destroy an otherwise strong defense. And from experience, this player has learned, there are no such things as *small* mistakes in OLYMPICA.

If you haven't found the weakness, view hexes 1309, 1310 and 1410. A familiar shape?

Notice that the drop area is more than two hexes away, *but* a direct line over level ground can be traced to the generator itself with troops as the only obstacle. With the use of tunnels or simple rearrangement, this mistake can be corrected. In any event, the fighting would be tough. The point is however, take the time to check the setup again and again-- this error *was* overlooked, and a sharp U.N. player would capitalize on it immediately.

A drop placed here and two to the south would spell big trouble. Normally, drops to the south would be pulverized as was shown earlier. But with the pressure of an immediate breakthrough into a vital area from the Northwest, perhaps another drop pushing through the opened whole to the generator itself, that all important compulsion move would have to be used to close the opened hole, and the U.N. units to the south will

have a fighting chance. Naturally, the object is to not even give them that. . .

**TUNNELS**

The tunnel system incorporated into OLYMPICA's design adds yet another strategy consideration to play. Rule 13.4 makes it possible for either player in control of a tunnel system to move forces fluidly throughout, strengthening any points in between. Thus, a well developed tunnel system can make its occupants extremely hard to dig out.

This comes about in part because of the concurrent effects tunnels produce on combat. Units underground in deep tunnels may not be attacked by ranged combat (rule 13.5.1), and infantry units under tunnel mouths are doubled for both attack and defense (13.5.2).

But perhaps the most significant point is found in rule 13.5.3, "when units (friendly) are both above and below a tunnel mouth, the underground unit may not be attacked from other hexes by itself, though the unit may fire out of the hex!"

Clearly, these three rules on Tunnel combat effects can have interesting applications for both sides.

For the Web player, it becomes further possible to delay the U.N.'s attempts at stealing the Web Generator by placing it underground. For example, in returning to the scenario, a tunnel mouth might be placed in hex 1814, a deep tunnel in 1713, and another deep tunnel in hex 1613.

This technique is especially effective after the Web Generator's location becomes known. As the Web's outer defenses crumble under the onslaught of U.N. forces, the Webbies begin to go underground.

With the tunnel system just set up, it is possible to stack a Web infantry unit with the Web Generator underground, a Web infantry unit on the surface above, a Web infantry units underground and on the surface of hex 1713, and two Web units-- one above and one below the tunnel mouth in hex 1814.

After the tunnel mouth is taken by the U.N., it will be at least two more turns before the Web Generator is reached because ranged combat is not possible in deep tunnels.

Viewing the rules dealing with Close Assaults, this almost forces the U.N. to bring the Boar in to try and open the Deep Tunnel so ranged combat can take place between U.N. units above the new tunnel mouth and the Web units below.

Again Web players, all this is taking time. . . and if you somehow manage to knock off the Boar before hand, the U.N.'s hopes of winning are considerably diminished.

For this reason, U.N. players, it is often best to bring down the Boar only when *immediate* use is planned, and make dead sure your infantry is in control of the surface and can restrict Web reinforcement counterattack patterns, steering them away from vital areas.

Yet, for all their good, the Tunnels also present the Web player with numerous headaches. They certainly do help when occupied by Web forces, but seem to do even more damage after falling into enemy hands.

Why do I mention this? In most games the U.N. will be in control after 5 or 6 turns. The question then is whether the U.N. can break the inner defense ring of Strongpoints and get to the Generator in time.

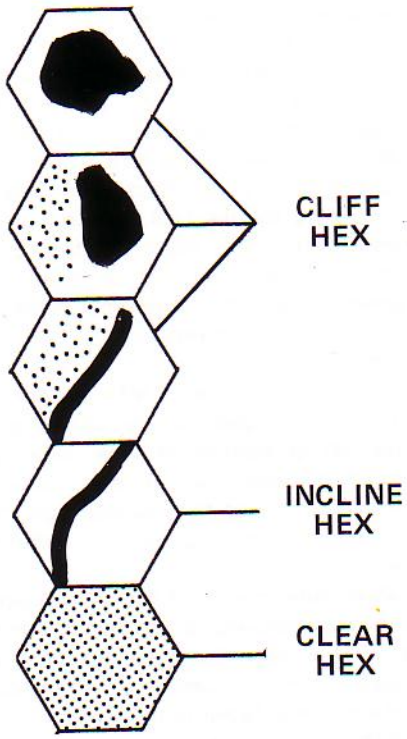
Optional placement tunnels will most likely be inside or close to the defense ring. What of the tunnels farther away from this perimeter? It simply comes down to the fact the Web doesn't have the forces to defend the initial fixed tunnels and the Generator, too.

In our initial set-up, the tunnels at 1009, 1010, and 1717, 1818 are required to be there. This is a built in weakness for the Web, as they can't be defended in this configuration. They are within range of SP fire, but remember the U.N. can put pressure on many areas at once. If the firepower of the SP is divided up trying to blanket the tunnels, the U.N. can make his way up the caldera much quicker. The Web players strength lies in concentrated barrages.

In returning to a comment made in the Initial Set-Up section-- why you should keep the tunnels covered-- if the U.N. player can get his hands on a tunnel, he will. The most devastating example is a Laser tank resting under a tunnel mouth. Protected by other units above, it can pound away turn after turn at the SPs and not be knocked out in return. The units on top would most likely be sacrificed (unless another Laser Tank rested on top) but then the U.N. player could move more units on top to cover next turn.

What happens if the U.N. doesn't put units above the mouth, or the covering unit is destroyed by one SP and then

**KEY TO OLYMPICA HEX IDENTIFICATION**




*During the last few months, we have received some requests for more specific information about the terrain marks on the OLYMPICA map. The diagram at left will help those who have been unable to figure it out yet. We are sorry for any problems encountered by the buyers.*

*....C.Ben Ostrander*

another fires at the Tank?

The Laser Tank may now be attacked alright but, by rule 13.5.2, units under tunnel mouths may ignore AR2, DR2, and DUST results.

Where 2 SPs firing on a Laser Tank at 2-1 odds would normally have 4 chances out of 6 for some kind of adverse result to the defender, with the elimination of DUST and DR2 results, the Web player can only score an effective blow with the role of a six. (an exchange is considered undesirable)

The higher probabilities at 3-1 and 4-1 odds are also reduced in a like manner. Where only two SPs were required before on level ground, the fire of four is now necessary to get similar odds of adverse effects on a tank underground.

Compounding this problem is the location of the four required tunnels. Notice they provide a way across the incline and cliff hexes relatively free of adverse effects of terrain. This also makes them the prime target of a U.N. attack.

Fortunately, there are steps the Web can take to shore up these weaknesses. First, incorporate the western set of tunnels into the inner defense of the Web Generator. Group your SPs and Web Generator in the same area so that essentially, you can protect two valuable objectives with a common defense.

An example of this might be to extend a deep tunnel from the tunnel mouth in hex 1009 to hex 1211, where the Web Generator would then be located. Strongpoints might be placed in hexes 1111, 1212, 1312, and 1311. This format would also leave one SP free to be mixed in among the dummy counters or infantry anywhere on the board.

The second thing to do would be via rule 13.6, abandon the tunnels to the east and demolish them, forcing the Laser Tanks to remain above ground, and also demolishing the tunnel mouth in hex 1010, sealing off that cliff face and isolating your defense. Compulsion coupled with terrain effects and SP fire would make an ascent up from the west incline risky for the U.N., at best.

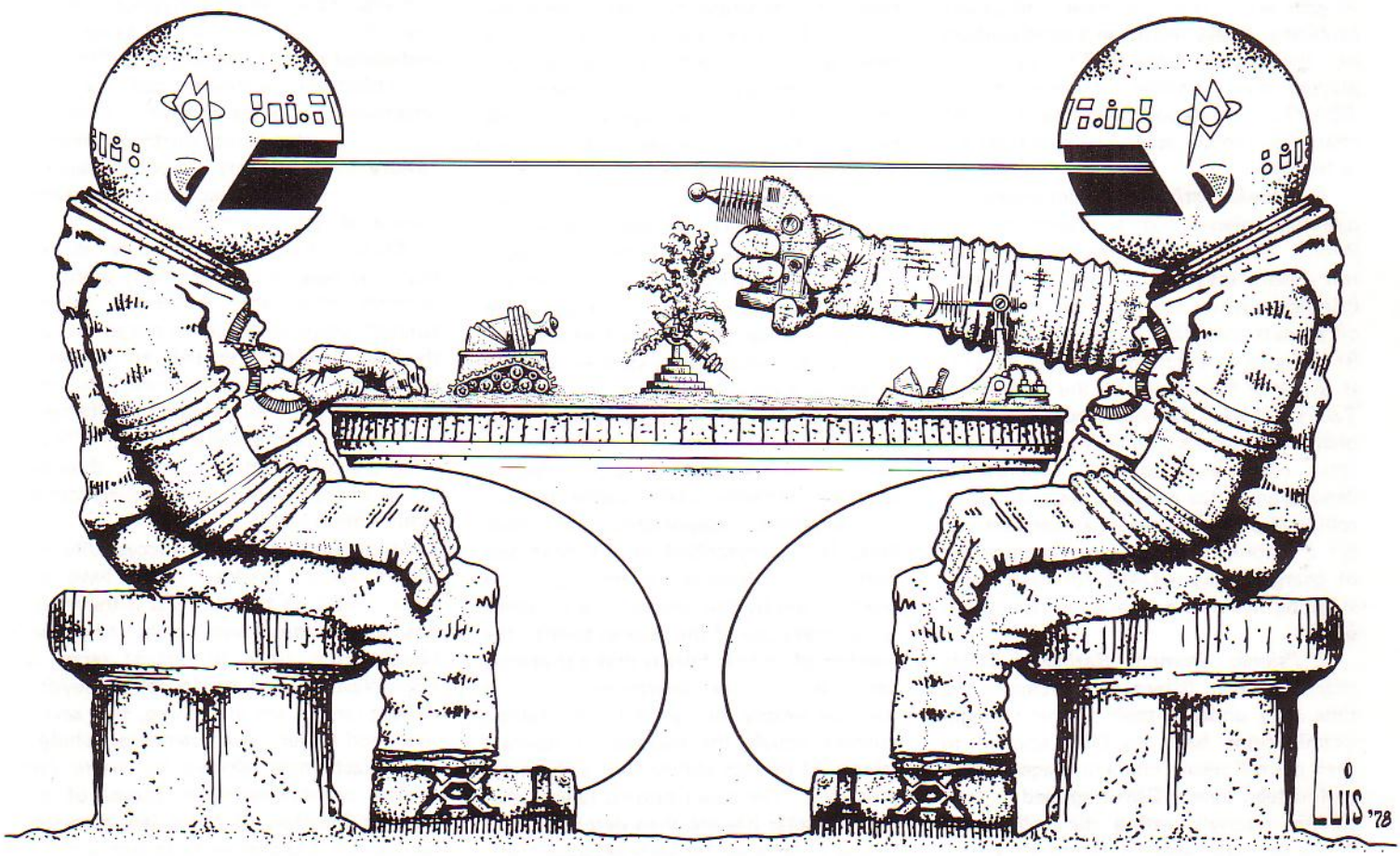
This pretty much forces him to come in right over your Strongpoints and infantry. This is exactly what you want.

You are also closer to arriving reinforcements on even game turns, which gives roughly 12 units reavailable for quick use. (4 units on turns 2, 4, 6) Web units approaching from the west can move freely up the incline with no effect on movement. Note also, you are not *required* to return units to the gameboard on any turn, so you can save up units on the odd turns to make sure you have the maximum 4 units available at the start of an even turn. (This is of course providing you have lost that many units in the intern.)

The drawback to some's way of thinking is that there is again, little uncertainty about your position, and the game becomes a tactical duel testing to the utmost each player's skill.

For these players, I leave one further consideration. Dummies do not count for stacking. If you place a few in with your SPs and surrounding infantry, you can effectively disguise the exact layout of your tunnel system from early discovery.

Tactical duel or not, OLYMPICA takes flawless play to win, and it is hoped the ideas presented herein will instill more sophisticated defenses, and hence inspire better play.




Checkmate!

# PSIONICS IN TRAVELLER

by

Kenneth W. Burke

My main complaint with the psionics of TRAVELLER is the conservatism that surrounds their acquisition and usage. Even though a character undergoes psionic training, he or she is not guaranteed psionic abilities; those which do receive psionic talents rarely acquire more than three. The talents themselves are lacking--telepathic mind assault is all but impossible to launch; telekinetics can move but mediocre weight amounts; teleportation-users find it all but impossible to gain skill. Due to these (and other) problems, I have rewritten a good portion of the psionic rules to TRAVELLER; players may consider anything in the TRAVELLER psionic rules that I do not change to remain as is. The new rules are as follows:

*1. Psionic Institute-* To determine if a qualified planet has a branch of the Psionic Institute, roll three dice; a 6+ die roll result means a branch is present. Psionic Institute branches can only exist on planets that have a population level of 9+ or have a technological level of 18+. If a planet has both, roll the dice *twice.* Two successful die rolls would mean the planet has *two* Psionic Institute branches (they could exist as allies or enemies, depending on the referee's desires). When rolling the dice to see if a character can get a psionic strength examination free of charge, apply a DM-1 for each social standing level the character has above seven.

*2. Psionic Strength Ratings-* Those characters aged fifteen to eighteen at the time they undergo their psionic strength examinations have no DMs applied to their die roll result; characters aged eleven to fourteen have a DM+1 applied to their psionic strength rating die roll result; characters aged seven to ten have a DM+2 applied to their P.S.R. die roll result; characters aged three to six have a DM+3 applied to the die roll. Those characters that are aged zero (the fatal stage of development) to two cannot have their P.S.R. determined for them; those characters who have their P.S.R. strengths determined for them at the ages of three to eighteen are considered to be the "students" and "wards" of the Psionic Institute. Students and wards wield considerable power (the only difference between the groups is that the students, being of aristocratic families, attend the Psionic Institute for training sessions *only*, while the wards, being a combination of runaways, orphans, outcasts, the children of psionic parents, and bastards have the Psionic Institute as their home; ten years after they begin training, students and wards are expected to have reached their maximum individual psionic talent levels. The Psionic Institute rarely requires a student or ward to perform missions before reaching adult age; once in a great while, though, the Institute *will* employ the services of a student or ward to act as a courier, a spy, or an assassin. Life at the Psionic Institute is never dull!

*3. Psionic Training-* A character can have up to six separate psionic talents; they are telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, awareness, teleportation, and mind-blast (to be described in the next section). The "special" psionic talent is given at will by the referee. For a character to make use of the psionic talents, the number of psionic talents that a character has must first be determined. This is done by simply rolling a die; the resulting number equals the number of separate talents of psionic ability that a character possesses. The exact psionic talents that the character has are then determined by rolling a die once for each separate talent a character has, and consults the following table:

| DIE ROLL | TALENT |
|---|---|
| 1 | Awareness |
| 2 | Clairvoyance |
| 3 | Mind-Blast |
| 4 | Telekinesis |
| 5 | Telepathy |
| 6 | Teleportation |

If you roll a number that has been rolled before, ignore the number and keep on rolling the die until only separate talents have been determined.

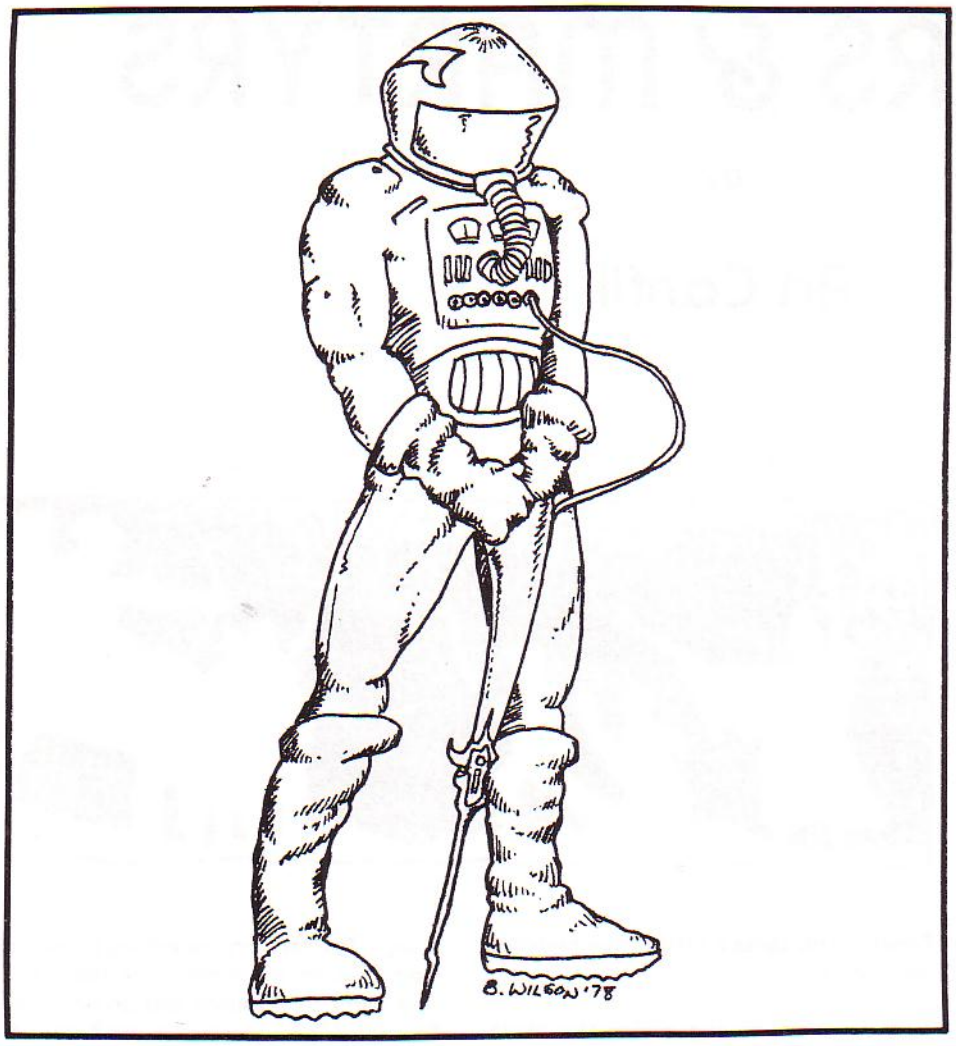
*4. Mind-Blast-* The telepathic ability of mind assault is now considered to be a separate talent altogether, known as "mind-blast"; a user of the mind-blast talent has the choice of either stunning, injuring, or killing an opposing character. Greater descriptions of mind-blast abilities are as follows:

STUN: Stun is a level three ability, requiring three psionic strength points to perform plus any additional psionic strength point costs due to range. An unshielded mind subjected to a "stun" mind-blast will be automatically rendered unconscious; in cases involving a shielded mind, determine the success of the attack as you would a telepathic mind assault against a shielded mind.

INJURE: Injure is a level six ability, requiring six psionic strength points to perform plus any additional psionic strength point costs due to range. An unshielded mind subjected to an "injury" mind-blast will be automatically rendered unconscious and the character it belongs to suffers twelve points worth of wounds; "injury" mind-blasts directed against shielded minds are resolved in the same manner as "stun" mind-blasts.

KILL: Kill is a level nine ability, requiring nine psionic strength points to perform plus any additional psionic strength point cost due to range. An unshielded mind subjected to a "kill" mind-blast will be anninhilated, the character that the anninhilated mind belongs to being automatically killed; "kill" mind-blasts directed against shielded minds are resolved in the same manner as "stun" mind-blasts.

Mind-blasts that are successfully resolved against shielded minds have the same effects on the minds as if they were unshielded; the range costs of mind-blasts, from close to distant range (a mind-blast cannot be launched beyond distant range), are one, three, five, seven, nine, and eleven. A character launching a mind-blast must always be aware (via psionic or non-psionic methods) of the victim's location; it takes less than one second for a character to launch a mind-blast. Psionic assaulting animals will always attack via "kill" mind-blasts.




*5. Telekinesis-* Telekinetics are now able to move more plentiful weight amounts. These new weight amounts, along with the levels of training necessary to move them, are as follows:

| Levels | Weights |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 kg |
| 2 | 5 kg |
| 3 | 10 kg |
| 4 | 25 kg |
| 5 | 50 kg |
| 6 | 75 kg |
| 7 | 100 kg |
| 8 | 250 kg |
| 9 | 500 kg |
| 10 | 750 kg |
| 11 | 1 mg |
| 12 | 5 mg |
| 13 | 10 mg |
| 14 | 25 mg |
| 15 | 50 mg |

One "kg" (kilogram) equals 2.2 pounds; one "mg" (megagram) equals 2.200 pounds. Megagrams are also referred to as "metric tons".

*6. Mind-Control-* Mind-control is a telepathic ability; a character must have a telepathic level of nine and expend nine psionic strength points plus any additional psionic strength point cost due to range to perform it. Mind-control allows a telepath to be totally in control of a victim's mind and therefore, action; the victim acts as if he, she, or it were but a mere extension of the telepath's own body, such as an arm or a leg. The telepath does not leave his, her, or its own body while using mind-control; rather, the telepath has his, her, or its consciousness in both bodies at the same time. The victim can be made to do anything the telepath desires the victim to do, suicide included; if the victim is killed while under mind-control, the mind-controlling telepath is rendered unconscious for twelve hours. The ability of mind-control lasts as long as the telepath is rendered unconscious for twelve hours. The ability of mind-control lasts as long as the telepath using it desires, or until (a) someone puts an artificial shield on the victim, (b) the victim dies, (c) the victim is moved out of range, or (d) the mind-controlling telepath dies. Mind-control can only be used against an unshielded mind; psionic-users, because of this, cannot be subjected to mind-control. It takes six seconds for the mind-control technique to take effect.

*7. Artificial Shields-* Artificial shields allow those who wear them immunity to all forms of telepathy and a psionic shield strength of nine.

*8. Experience-* At the end of each game month, two die are rolled once per psionic talent that a character has, to determine possible experience gains. For each roll of 8+, a character advances one level of experience in whatever individual psionic talent that was rolled for.

*9. Recovery-* Characters now recover any psionic strength points they had to spend to perform psionic talents the moment they stop performing those talents that caused them to spend the psionic strength points to begin with.

*10. Psionic Devices-* As there are certain drugs which increase a psionic-user's power and abilities, there are also certain types of artifacts, known as *psionic devices,* that do likewise. Psionic devices come in many sizes and shapes; they usually fall into one of three categories--devices which allow a character the use of a certain psionic ability; devices which allow a character the use of a certain psionic ability plus the necessary psionic strength points needed to perform the psionic ability. Because of the psionic nature of the devices they are usually outlawed on planets with law levels of one or higher; even on planets with a law level of zero, discovery of them by planetary authorities will almost always result in their seizure. Roll an 11+ on two dice to avoid such seizures. The devices themselves cannot be bought at a store; rather, they must be found. Psionic devices can be found in such places as ancient ruins, excavation sites, or derelict spaceships. The Psionic Institute offers generous rewards for psionic devices; these rewards have, on occasion, exceeded CR 1,000,000,000!

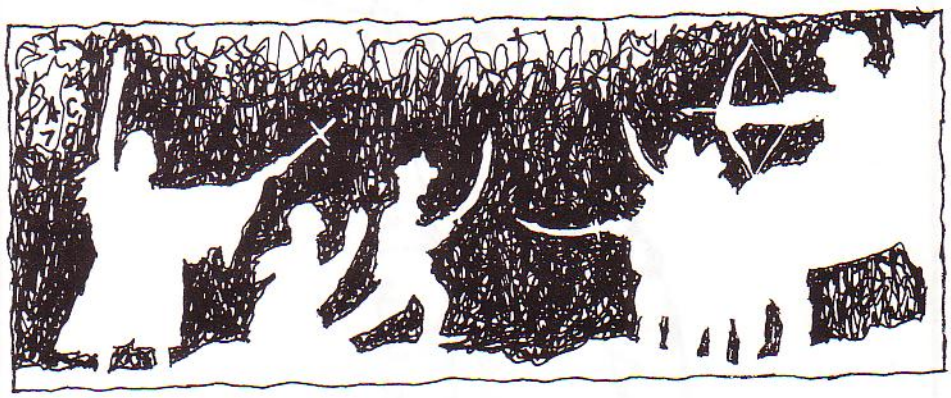
The psionics of TRAVELLER are not the only part of the game that needs revision; I can think of several sections of the rulebook that need to be redefined, overhauled, or dropped altogether. Hopefully, G.D.W. will do this; TRAVELLER is at the same stage of development that DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS was at a few years ago, and, if given time to develop, will be as successful. Its future now lies in the hands of the Game Designer's Workshop; let us hope they improve it.

# TARTARS & MARTYRS

by

Art Canfil

*TARTARS & MARTYRS is a bold, new concept in game design/feedback. The bare essentials of a Metagaming MicroGame exist in T&M. Readers and more important, T&M players are encouraged to send their ideas, suggestions, and advice to the designer in care of Metagaming's P.O. Box. He will correlate all material with its proper credit, and if possible, Metagaming will publish T&M as a MicroGame. Here is your chance to participate in the design of a game from initial conception.*



## INTRODUCTION

### GENERAL

The basic game of TARTARS AND MARTYRS involves two players in an imaginary conflict between five Tartars, war-hungry and armed to the teeth, and five mystical, unarmed European religious Martyrs.

Playing time is very brief for TARTARS AND MARTYRS; fifteen to thirty minutes should suffice for the basic game.

### SETUP

Place the map board on the playing surface. Position each of the five dark Tartar counters in their designated starting hexes. (See map)

Set out your copies of the status sheets for the two sides.

Determine which player will play which side, either by agreement or by lot.

The player controlling the Tartars now rolls two dice, the resulting sums (from 2 to 12) being entered on the Tartar status sheet in both the "vitality points remaining" and the "conversion resistance points remaining" columns for all five Tartars. This takes a total of ten two-dice rolls, two each.

Both at this time and during the entire game the status sheets may be kept concealed from the opposing players.

In a similar manner, the player controlling the Martyrs rolls two dice five times to determine the "vitality points remaining" for the five Martyrs, entering them on his status sheet. (At this time, the Martyr player ignores the area designated for Converted Tartars on his status sheet.)

### BASIC GAME SCENARIO

In the basic game, any terrain differences shown on the map board are ignored.

The Tartars represent an advance probing unit riding before the invading Golden Horde. Their only real interest in the rather curious Martyrs they encounter is to clear them from the field so that the Tartars following may proceed without distraction. For this reason, they plan to kill all five Martyrs.

The Martyrs, on the other hand, represent a highly motivated sect which hopes to convert the pagan invaders from the East-- and to save Christendom in the doing. The Martyrs are willing to give up their lives in the defense of the Faith; they carry no weapons and do not fight. Their goal is to convert all the Tartars to their religion.

Tartars who are converted do not share the nonviolent ideals of the Martyrs. They continue to fight-- although against their former comrades. The scruples of the Martyrs do not extend to restraining the coverted Tartars from murdering their ex-compatriots.

### VICTORY CONDITIONS

In the basic game, victory conditions are as follows:

**Tartar Victory.** A Tartar victory results when all Martyrs have been killed, along with any coverted Tartars.

**Martyr Victory.** A Martyr victory consists of the elimination of all hostile Tartars, by conversion and/or by killing.

**Tie.** A draw or tie results if the only surviving counters are those for converted Tartars.

### SOLITAIRE GAME

TARTARS AND MARTYRS may also be played by one person, simply by playing both sides in the same manner as a two-sided game.

## ORDER OF PLAY

TARTARS AND MARTYRS is played in alternating turns. During his turn, each player moves any or all of his counters. The Player designates his "targets" to his opponent. The player then takes all attacks and/or proselytization (converting) action. For any effective attack or proselytization, the degree of effectiveness is then determined, and this sum is subtracted from the opponent's status sheet.

### PLAY SEQUENCE

The sequence of play for TARTARS AND MARTYRS is as follows:

- Tartars move.
- Tartars designate targets.
- Tartars make attacks.
- Tartars determine damage.
- Martyr dead removed.
- Converted Tartars designate targets.
- Martyrs proselytize.
- Converted Tartars attack.
- Martyrs determine degree of conversion.
- Converted Tartars determine damage.
- Martyrs take control of newly-converted Tartars.
- Tartar dead removed.

The preceeding is one round of play (two turns).

### CONTROL OF CONVERTED TARTARS

After a Tartar is converted, that Tartar is lost to the control of the Tartar player. The converted Tartar may be used by the Martyr player beginning on the Martyr turn of the round following the conversion.

## MOVEMENT

### GENERAL

Movement is counted in hexes. The movement capability of any counter may not be accumulated from one turn to the next.

### STACKING OF COUNTERS

Counters may not be stacked; they may not move through or stop on the same hex that is occupied by another counter at the same time.

### MOVEMENT ABILITIES

All Tartars, including converted Tartars, may move ten spaces per turn.

Martyrs may move seven spaces per turn.

No counter is required to move all, or any, of its capability in any turn. Effects of terrain are ignored in the basic game.

## COMBAT & PROSELYTIZATION

### GENERAL

The game mechanics of combat and proselytization are similar in TARTARS AND MARTYRS. After the movement phase of a turn, combat and/or proselytization takes place.

### COMBAT/PROSELYTIZATION MECHANICS

At the start of the attack/proselytization phase of a turn, any and all "targets" are designated for each attacking or proselytizing counter. Such designations are made openly to the opposing player, and may not later be changed after actual combat or proselytization has begun.

Now a two-dice roll is made for each attacking or proselytizing counter. If a roll as high or higher than that required by the proper table (see tables) is effected.

When the target is effected, one die is rolled. The sum rolled is then subtracted from the target counter's status sheet (from the vitality points or from the conversion resistance, according to the nature of the "attack").

### DEATHS

Whenever a counter's vitality points reach zero or lower, it is considered "dead", and is immediately removed from the map board and from play.

### CONVERSIONS

Whenever the conversion resistance points of a Tartar equals or drops below zero, the Tartar is "converted", and is immediately transferred to the status sheet and control of the Martyr player. The vitality points of the Tartar are also transferred. Counters for converted Tartars are replaced with stripped, Converted Tartar counters with the same number designation.

## COMBAT/PROSELYTIZATION TABLES

### GENERAL

Two tables are used to show dice rolls needed to effect targets at various ranges. (Another table covering sword combat follows.) All Tartar attacks made from distances of more than one hex from target are made with a composite bow.

Range has an effect on both the accuracy of fired arrows and the ability of the Martyrs' voices to be heard and understood.

**COMBAT TABLE FOR BOW**

| Range | 1-5 | 6-9 | 10-15 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Roll Needed | 7 | 8 | 9 |

**PROSELYTIZATION TABLE**

| Range | 1-4 | 5-9 | 10-12 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Roll Needed | 8 | 10 | 11 |

Targets at ranges beyond the highest shown on the Tables are considered out of range.

### SWORD COMBAT

Sword combat may take place only against a target which is immediately adjacent, that is, in the next hex.

### SWORD COMBAT TABLE

| Roll | 2-6 | 7-10 | 11-12 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Effect | Miss | Hit | Decapitation |

On a Decapitation roll, the target counter is automatically killed, and is removed from play without a single-die roll being made or subtracting from the target's vitality points.

On a Hit roll, a one-die roll is made for damage, as with bow combat, but an additional point is subtracted from the target's vitality points as a bonus for the sword's effectiveness.

### DESIGNATED TARGETS

In all combat and proselytization, Tartars and Martrys may designate only one target per turn, and must designate which counter is the target for each attacker prior to the attack/proselytization phase of the turn.

A single target may be chosen by more than one attacker/proselytizer in a single turn, however.

## OPTIONAL RULES

## TERRAIN

### GENERAL

To allow play of TARTARS AND MARTYRS with the use of terrain variations and thus both give the game a more "realistic" feel and permit players to better utilize positional advantages in their tactics, the following rules are appended. These rules are intended to make use of the terrain features included on the TARTARS AND MARTYRS map board.

The use of these terrain rules, like the rest of the Optional Rules, are entirely at the descretion of the players, though all such decisions should be made clear before play starts, to prevent actual combat at some critical point in a game.

## EFFECT ON MOVEMENT

### CLEAR TERRAIN

Clear terrain is indicated on the map board by a lack of any other indication; that is, any hex which has all of its space left blank, is considered clear terrain.

Clear terrain is open ground without any obstructions of any unusual kind. Therefore movement over clear terrain is subject to the same rules of movement found in the basic rules, ie., if a Tartar were to move entirely on clear terrain, he would be able to cover ten hexes in a turn. (Similarly, a Martyr could cover seven hexes.)

Thus, with clear terrain, one hex equals one hex of movement capability.

### MARSH

Marsh is indicated on the map board by the standard symbols for marshland. (See terrain table for all map symbols.)

The effect of marsh on movement is as follows: any movement which places a counter in a marsh hex during any part of the movement ends immediately in that hex, regardless of the type of terrain covered prior to landing in the marsh hex, and regardless of the amount of movement capability which would otherwise be left.

Thus a counter moving so as to cross a marsh would stop in the first marsh hex encountered, and would then move only one hex as long as it continues to

land on marsh hexes. But the first move in which it reaches a hex with terrain other than marsh (or lake), it may continue under the effects of that terrain.

### HILLS

Hills are indicated on the map board by stylized drawings. Any hex which has any portion of a hill shown is considered to be entirely a hill hex.

A hill is rough and steep terrain. Movement over hill terrain requires four times the use of movement capability that clear terrain requires. In other words, each hill hex is counted as four clear terrain hexes in terms of movement.

### STREAM

The stream is indicated on the map board by a dark, wide line.

Any hex which has the stream flowing through it remains as the type of terrain otherwise shown for the hex, with the following exception:

Any counter attempting to cross the stream must spend an entire movement phase of a turn in "fording". In this operation, the counter in effect loses one movement phase. During such a phase, the player simply states that the counter is fording for its movement phase.

### BRIDGE

The bridge is indicated by a conventional topographic symbol.

The effect of the bridge is to eliminate the need of the fording operation at the point where it crosses the stream. Movement on the bridge hex is identical to movement along any road hex.

### ROAD

The road is indicated by two wavy parallel lines.

Movement along the road requires only one-half the "effort" of moving over open terrain. Thus a counter may move twice as far along the road as on clear terrain during a movement phase.

To be able to move along the road, a counter must begin and end its movement phase on the road, remaining there for the whole movement phase, in order to take advantage of the rapid movement possible on the road.

Any use of road hexes other than described above requires them to be treated as open terrain hexes for movement purposes.

### WOODS

The woods are indicated by a topographic symbol.

Movement over wooded terrain requires twice the movement effort as is required by open terrain. Thus, woods hexes are counted as equal to two open terrain hexes for movement purposes.

### LAKE

The lake is indicated by a field of wave-like lines.

Lake hexes, like the borders of the map, are impassable.

## TERRAIN EFFECT ON COMBAT & PROSELYTIZATION

The only effects of terrain upon combat and proselytization are as follows:

### HILLS

Any counter firing arrows from a hill toward any target not itself on a hill has an added bonus toward hitting its target. Upon making an attack roll, the firing player subtracts two points from the roll which would otherwise be required by the bow combat table.

Likewise, any proselytizing counter gets a bonus for proselytizing from a hill to any target not on a hill. A two point bonus is also subtracted in this case from the required roll shown on the proselytization table.

### WOODS

Any counter firing either into the woods at a target, through the woods at a target on the other side, or from the woods at a target anywhere, takes a two point disadvantage. The only exception to this optional rule is firing from a hill at a target beyond the woods, in which case the effect of the woods is ignored.

When the woods' effect upon firing arrows is taken into account, two points are added to the roll which would otherwise be needed by the combat table.

In a similar manner, any counter which proselytizes to a target in the woods, at a target on the other side of the woods, or from the woods at a target in any terrain takes a two-point disadvantage. This is two points which must be rolled in addition to that shown on the proselytization table.

As with combat, however, proselytization to a target beyond the woods by a counter on a hill is not effected by the woods.

### MARSH

No combat or proselytization "attacks" may be made by any counter which is in a marsh hex.

### FORDING

During any turn designated by the players for the fording of a counter of a river, no attacks of proselytizations may be made by that counter.

### SHOCK AND DOUBT

This rule is included to allow another "realistic" touch to TARTARS AND MARTYRS.

### SHOCK

When any Martyr is hit by a single attacker for five or more points of damage in a single turn, that Martyr cannot proselytize for the next two turns.

### DOUBT

When any Tartar is effected by the proselytization of a single Martyr for five or more points, that Tartar may not make any form of attack for the next two turns.


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*The designer of this game wishes to thank the following persons and organizations for their aid and support in the playtesting and development of TARTARS AND MARTYRS:*

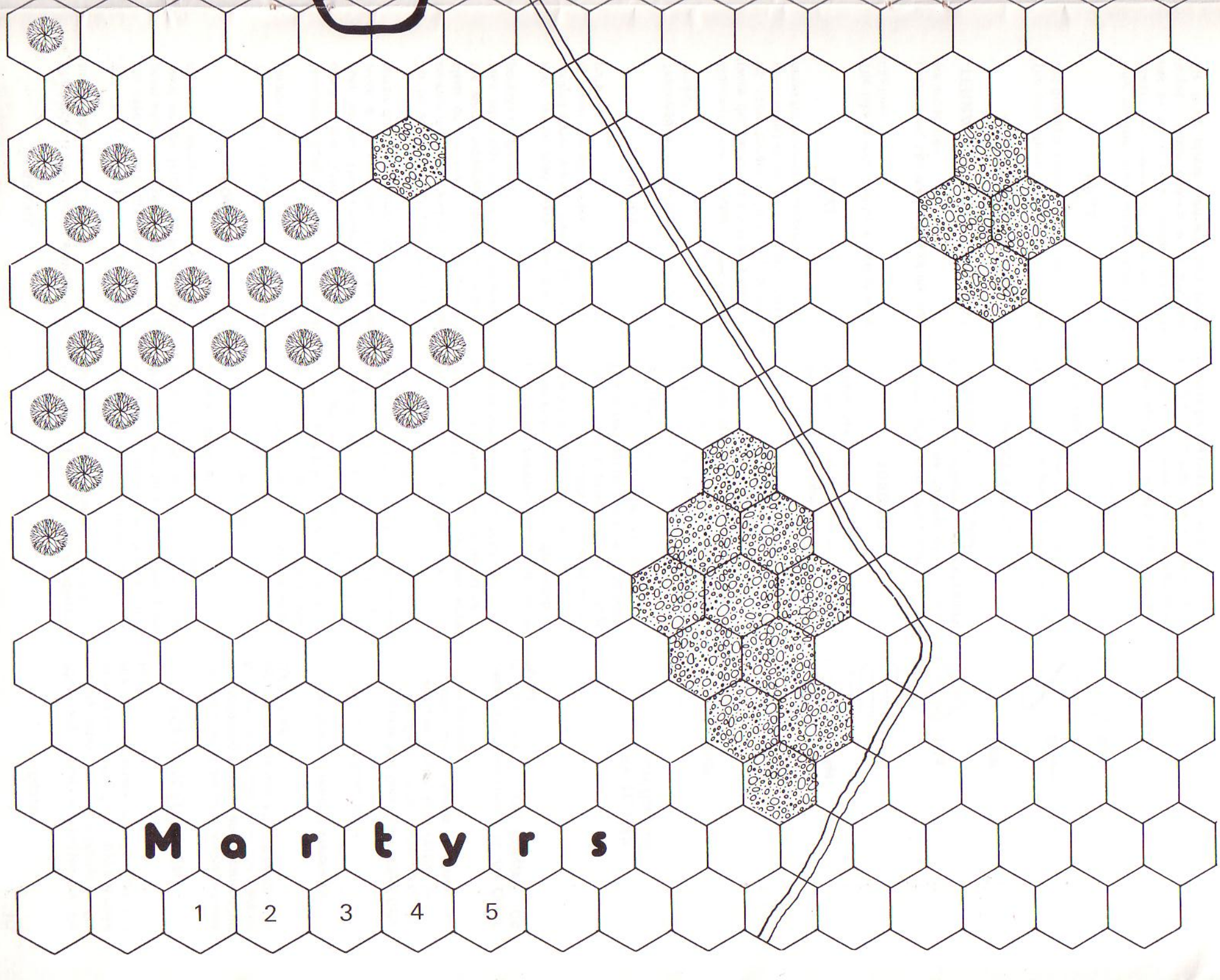
*The Galactic Sword of Vengeance*

*The Gambit Game Store*

*Adrianne Mei Seng Canfil, Chris Dahl, John Deely, Mike Harrington, Ken and Len Kaufer, Gleb Perfilof and all those whose names I shamefully cannot recall.*


*Design and development by Art Canfil, PO Box 40132, San Francisco, CA 94140.*

## KEY TO HEX
**-identification-**


Martyrs
1 2 3 4 5

## THE SPACE GAMER 1978 GAME SURVEY

This is THE SPACE GAMER'S second annual survey of the science fiction and fantasy game industry. It covers games, companies, and magazines. This is your chance to vote your favorites and knock the turkeys. Results will probably appear in THE SPACE GAMER No. 22.

Not all games published are included in the survey. Most publications that are not stand- alone games have been omitted. Other omissions are by editorial discretion for marginally distributed products.

The OVERALL rating is the only evaluation. This is a measure of how well you liked a product as a whole, including components, clarity, design quality, playability, graphics, whether or not you got your money's worth, and all other factors you consider important to your enjoyment of the publication.

The rating is on a one (1) to nine (9) scale. One would be the lowest rating and nine the hightest rating. Five would represent the rating for a game you neither liked nor disliked, or felt was only a fair, average effort.

RATE ONLY PUBLICATION YOU OWN OR HAVE PLAYED! Rating something you have not played or bought means you are rating the appeal of advertising only, which will bias the results.

GAME TYPING: For convenience, the games have been grouped into several categories. We also ask you to rate these categories as to the type you most prefer. Use the one to nine scalse for these ratings also.

MAGAZINES: We also ask for ratings of magazines. The science fiction/fantasy content of these publications varies. Please rate how much you like the magazine regardless of the amount of SF/F content.

COMPANY RATINGS: Rate each company by how pleased you are with what it is doing in SF/F gaming. This would include game quality, service, and other factors that influence your opinion.

| RATE | CODE | GAME TYPE RATINGS |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | FRP | Fantasy Role Playing |
| _____ | FBG | Fantasy Board Game |
| _____ | PTC | Planetary Tactical Combat |
| _____ | FSL | Future Society Level |
| _____ | STL | Space Tactical Level |
| _____ | SRP | Space Role Playing |
| _____ | UNC | Unclassified |

### MAGAZINE RATINGS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | Strategy & Tactics | SPI $5.00 |
| _____ | Moves | SPI $2.00 |
| _____ | The General | AH $1.50 |
| _____ | The Dragon | TSR $2.00 |
| _____ | Waragmer's Digest | |
| _____ | Fire & Movement | |
| _____ | White Dwarf (British) | |
| _____ | The Space Gamer | MET $1.50 |

### COMPANIES RATINGS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | AH | Avalon Hill |
| _____ | BTL | Battleline |
| _____ | CSM | Chaosium |
| _____ | EON | EON Products |
| _____ | EX | Excalibur |
| _____ | FGU | Fantasy Games Unlimited |
| _____ | FBI | Flying Buffalo, Inc. |
| _____ | GDW | Game Designer's Workshop |
| _____ | GTM | Gametime Games |
| _____ | MET | Metagaming |
| _____ | SPI | Simulation Publications Inc. |
| _____ | TSR | Tactical Studies Rules |
| _____ | ZOC | Zocchi & Associates |
| _____ | GTM | Game Time Games |
| _____ | DIM | Dimension Six |
| _____ | CON | Conflict Games |

CODES: Zip-Plastic Bagged
Box-Boxed
RB-Rules Booklet

### PLANETARY TACTICAL LEVEL

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | Star Soldier | SPI | Box | $ 9.00 |
| _____ | Star Ship Trooper | AH | Box | $10.00 |
| _____ | Atlantis 12,500 | EX | Zip | $ 3.49 |
| _____ | Ogre | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Chitin:I | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Rivets | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Olympica | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | GEV | MET | Zip | $ 3.95 |
| _____ | Icewar | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Sticks & Stones | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Invasion America | SPI | Box | $12.00 |
| _____ | Objective Moscow | SPI | Box | $12.00 |

### SPACE TACTICAL LEVEL

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | Alpha Omega | BTL | Box | $13.00 |
| _____ | Star Fighter | GTM | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | WarpWar | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Battlefleet Mars | SPI | Box | $12.00 |
| _____ | Starforce | SPI | Box | $ 9.00 |
| _____ | AlienSpace | ZOC | Zip | $ 5.00 |
| _____ | Quazar | EX | Box | $12.00 |
| _____ | The Ythri | MET | Zip | $ 8.00 |
| _____ | Direct Conflict | DIM | Box | $10.00 |
| _____ | Mayday | GDW | Zip | $ 5.00 |
| _____ | Blackhole | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |

### FUTURE SOCIETY LEVEL

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | Second Empire | DIM | Box | $13.95 |
| _____ | Stellar Conquest | MET | Zip | $ 9.00 |
| _____ | Star Probe | TSR | Zip | $ 6.00 |
| _____ | Star Empires | TSR | Zip | $ 7.50 |
| _____ | Godsfire | MET | Zip | $15.00 |
| _____ | Outreach | SPI | Box | $ 9.00 |
| _____ | Imperium | CON | Box | $11.95 |
| _____ | After The Holocaust | SPI | Box | $12.00 |

### SPACE ROLE PLAYING

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | Starfaring | FBI | RB | $ 6.00 |
| _____ | Traveller | GDW | Box | $12.00 |
| _____ | Gamma World | TSR | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Flash Gordon | FGU | RB | $ 6.00 |
| _____ | Starships & Spacemen | FGU | RB | $ 7.00 |
| _____ | Metamorphosis Alpha | TSR | RB | $ 5.00 |

### UNCLASSIFIED

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | Cosmic Encounters | EON | Box | $10.00 |
| _____ | Strange New Worlds | GTM | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Super Hero '44 | ZOC | Zip | $ 7.00 |
| _____ | Star Web | FBI | Mail | $ 2.00 |

## SPECIAL PULL–OUT SECTION

### FANTASY ROLE PLAYING

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | TFT: Wizard | MET | Zip | $ 3.95 |
| _____ | Citadel | FGU | RB | $ 4.00 |
| _____ | TFT: DeathTest | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Tunnels & Trolls | FBI | RB | $ 3.00 |
| _____ | FTF: Melee | MET | Zip | $ 2.95 |
| _____ | Dungeon! | TSR | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Chivalry & Sorcery | FGU | RB | $10.00 |
| _____ | Swords & Sorcery | SPI | Box | $13.00 |
| _____ | Dungeons & Dragons (Old) | TSR | Box | $15.00 |
| _____ | Dungeons & Dragons (New) | TSR | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Monster Manual | TSR | RB | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Empire of the Petal Throne | TSR | Box | $27.50 |
| _____ | D&D-Advanced book | TSR | RB | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Swords & Sorcerors | FGU | RB | $ 8.00 |

### FANTASY BOARD GAMES

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | War of Wizards | TSR | Box | $10.00 |
| _____ | White Bear & Red Moon | CSM | Zip | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Lankhmar | TSR | Box | $10.00 |
| _____ | Spellmaker | GTM | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Nomad Gods | CSM | Zip | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Warlocks & Warriors | TSR | Box | $ 6.95 |
| _____ | Quest | GTM | Box | $ 9.95 |
| _____ | Sorceror | SPI | Box | $ 9.00 |
| _____ | Runequest | CSM | Zip | $ 8.00 |
| _____ | Battle of Five Armies | TSR | Zip | $ 5.00 |
| _____ | ELRIC | CSM | Zip | $12.50 |
| _____ | The Ring Trilogy | SPI | Box | $20.00 |
| _____ | Lords & Wizards | FGU | RB | $12.00 |

After six issues of slick TSG it is time to evalutate. In many ways I feel we are the prettiest eunuch in town. It might be better to return to a more informal, "fannish" flavor and dump the slick. The questions below seek your feelings.

Proposed Format: Instead of our current slick look we'd use plain white 8½ x 11 paper, no color, little art, 16-24 pages and charge 75 cents to one dollar per issue. The emphasis would be informal to encourage maximum reader participation. We'd adjust the remaining issues of subscribers or give cash refunds. Quality of writing would be the same, or improve as it has. This would be more clearly a "house organ".

1a) I like TSG as is, don't change it, I'll quit buying.

1b) I would still buy TSG in the proposed format.

1c) I probably won't buy TSG again whatever you guys do.

Those who've been with us awhile remember the Eldon Tannish fiction pieces. Eldon was a future, world class, tournament gamer. The writing was only fair, at best, but about half our readers rated Eldon stories really high. The other half rated Eldon in the pits.

Question: We've had another Eldon story around for 18 months waiting another rewrite for publication. Would you like to see it published? (check one)

2a) Ugh, don't burden me with that tripe again.

2b) Yeh, I'd like to see the new Eldon story.

The following information helps us to generally identify our customer base. Knowing more about you helps us serve you better and identifies new markets.

### AGE

_____ under 12
_____ 13-16
_____ 17-20
_____ 21-25
_____ 26-30
_____ 31-39
_____ over 39

_____male _____female

### YEARS OF FORMAL EDUCATION

_____ less than 9
_____ 9-12
_____ 13-14
_____ 15-16
_____ more than 16

Yes No (circle one) current student

### RELATIONSHIPS

_____ married
_____ single
_____ divorced/separated
_____ number of children
_____ dorm/group living
_____ cohabitating
_____ commune
_____ living at home

### PHILOSOPHY (check those appropriate)

_____ very conservative
_____ liberal
_____ uninvolved
_____ socialist
_____ isolationist
_____ minoritist
_____ conservative
_____ very liberal
_____ apathetic
_____ religicist
_____ internationalist
_____ bureaucratist
_____ moderate
_____ anarchist
_____ communist
_____ indifferent
_____ monarchist
_____ stop the world and let me off, now!

### FREE INPUT (complete these statements)

1) I hope Metagaming will never _____

_____

_____

2) The thing I want Metagaming to do most in 1979 is _____.

_____

_____

3) Metagaming irritates me most when _____

_____

_____

4) I appreciate Metagaming most when _____

_____

_____

## SPECIAL PULL–OUT SECTION

5) There's no place on this form for me to say _____

_____

_____

**INSIDE HUMOR DEPT.**
**RED STRIKES AGAIN!**

Red "John Galt" Darnigame's at it again. The boy genius, a little greying now, zapped through Austin last week to wow us with the latest project of his Born Again Games Inc.

Red's going to come out with a new line of small games to be known as Itsy-Bitsy Teensy-Weensy games (TM applied for). The games will be packaged in used Tic-Tac boxes, about the size of a match box.

Red says gaming is sick and tired of monster games like Ogre that can often take a whole hour to play. "Most people like me can concentrate for . . . .uh. . .", said Red, ". . . . is this Austin." Itsy-Bitsy Teensy-Weensy games (IBTW's) will have 4-8 play counters, up to 100 words of rules (mostly english) printed on the back of the 2½" by 4" map. The games are designed for learning in 200 seconds with the average game lasting 4-6 minutes, if you are stoned. Red will even do all the artwork, left handed of course, since the right hand is needed for writing the rules.

His first releases will be a group of 144 titles distributed together in display boxes at McDonalds everywhere. Suggested retail price will be 35 cents or ¼ book of green stamps. The games will be available by mail, providing you are of Polish decent on your maiden grandmother's side, mail your order on pink KISS stationary and keep a pet turtle named "weintraub", who refuses to eat anything but honey-dipped spanish flies.

Among the first group of games are THE BIG THING THAT FIGHTS A LOT OF LITTLE THINGS AND EATS SELECTED LOW RENT PORTIONS OF THE NEW YORK BUSINESS DISTRICT BUT IN NO WAY CAN BE CONFUSED WITH AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT GAME ABOUT A GIANT TANK.

Aside from the one game mentioned the other 143 games are all space tactical games where each counter represents one ship. Says Red, "I feel the hot market is tactical spaceship games where one counter represents one spaceship. I want to cover an area where there is a lot of demand and where very little has been done by other companies."

Then, Red was gone as he usually, and thankfully, is. His 1956 VW van was slowly working its way up the access road of IH-35, with Red keeping a sharp eye pealed for discarded Tic-Tac boxes. We will, no doubt, see Red again some time. His visits remind us that we see the world through blinders and always need to widen our vision.

(ED-Note: Red "John Galt" Darnigame pieces have appeared in several, mostly out-of-print, issues of TSG. No one should think he spoofs any real persons of any real game companies, . . . . honest . . . . well, maybe!)

# ORDER FORM

## SPECIAL PULL—OUT SECTION

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____TYO | The Ythri | $8.00 ea | $8.00 ea | _____ |

MICROGAMES

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____OGR | No. 1 OGRE (Cybenetic Tank Game) | $2.95 ea | $2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____CTN | No. 2 CHITIN I: The Harvest Wars (Insect Combat) | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____MLE | No. 3 The Fantasy Trip: MELEE (Man-to-man fantasy game) | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____WPW | No. 4 WARPWAR (Diceless spaceship combat) | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____RIV | No. 5 RIVETS (Robotic Unit Combat) | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____WIZ | No. 6 The Fantasy Trip: WIZARD (Magical Combat) | 3.95 ea | 3.50 ea | _____ |
| _____OLM | No. 7 OLYMPICA: The U.N. Mars Raid | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____GEV | No. 8 G.E.V. (2nd game of OGRE series) | 3.95 ea | 3.50 ea | _____ |
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| _____BHL | No.10 BLACK HOLE (Spaceman Raids) | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |
| _____SAS | No.11 STICKS & STONES (Stone Age Rites) | 2.95 ea | 2.50 ea | _____ |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____DET | No. 1 The Fantasy Trip: DEATH TEST (Solitare Adventure) | $2.95 ea | $2.50 ea | _____ |

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|---|---|---|
| _____TFT 1 | Heroes & Heroines | $2.95 ea _____ |
| _____TFT 2 | Heroes & Magic users | 2.95 ea _____ |
| _____TFT 3 | The Dwarves | 2.95 ea _____ |
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| _____TFT 9 | Orcs no. 2 - Bows & Crossbows | 2.95 ea _____ |
| _____TFT 10 | Hobgoblins no. 2 - 6 bows, 6 axes | 2.95 ea _____ |

See page 4 for special ordering conditions.

| | |
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SPECIAL PULL—OUT SECTION

Tartars
1
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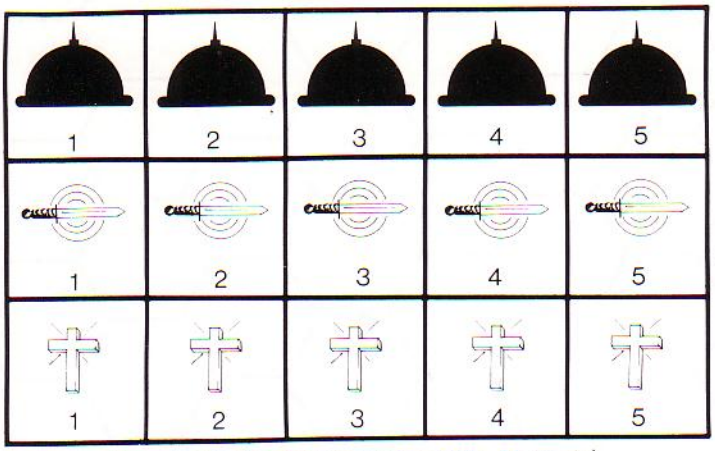



TARTARS

CONVERTS

MARTYRS

## TARTARS & MARTYRS
**Record and Counter Sheets**

(Permission to photocopy counters- no resale)

**TARTARS** **STATUS SHEET**

| | *Vitality Points Remaining* | *Conversion Res. Pts. Rmg.* |
|---|---|---|
| **no.1** | | |
| **no.2** | | |
| **no.3** | | |
| **no.4** | | |
| **no.5** | | |

(Permission to photocopy record sheets- no resale)

**MARTYRS** **STATUS SHEET**

| | *Vitality Points Remaining* |
|---|---|
| **MARTYR no.1** | |
| **MARTYR no.2** | |
| **MARTYR no.3** | |
| **MARTYR no.4** | |
| **MARTYR no.5** | |
| **CONVERT TARTAR no.1** | |
| **CONVERT TARTAR no.2** | |
| **CONVERT TARTAR no.3** | |
| **CONVERT TARTAR no.4** | |
| **CONVERT TARTAR no.5** | |

# REALITY IN MELEE

BY

## Ronald Pehr

What! (I hear you cry) What does he mean reality! This is supposed to be a *fantasy* war game! Be assured that I do not for moment intend to tamper with the idea of MELEE as a fantasy combat resolution system. There will be no dissertation on how much food a figure needs to explore a labyrinth each day, the precise medical effect of swords on the human body, or why magic must follow the laws of physics. What I propose is the introduction of historical warriors, with the arms and armor appropriate to them. This will allow playing out of historically-based scenarios, mixture of history and mythology, or matching warriors of different eras against each other. All of the weaponry in MELEE was used by real warriors at some time in history, so the idea of equipping figures as real men once would have armed themselves is not going to ruin MELEE with reality, but rather suggest a new dimension of fantasy combat.

**NEOLITHIC TRIBESMAN:** Prehistoric hunters and early farmers fought among themselves with all the verve and enthusiasm of their later, better armed and organized counterparts. Neolithic battles would be small skirmishes and raids, each man for himself, with planning perhaps going into staging an ambush, but no tactics for actual resolution of a battle. Neolithic warriors do not wear armor, although some, in colder climates, might wear animal furs or skins offering some small protection. Any such "armor" will stop 1 hit, adjust DX by 2, and have no effect on MA. Neolithic warriors do not use shields, although later primitive types might have animal-hide shields that stop 1 hit adjust DX by 1.

CHARACTERISTIC NEOLITHIC WEAPONS INCLUDE:

Short bows with fling-tipped arrows: ST needed is 9. Damage is 1 die- 2 points.

Spears have stone tips. They do 1 die +1 point. If matched against chainmail or plate, and a hit is scored which does not penetrate the armor, roll to see if the tip breaks. Roll 1 out of 6 for chainmail, 1 or 2 for plate.

Clubs and slings are as in MELEE.

Boomerangs are a missile weapon, requiring ST of 9, doing damage of 1 die - 1 point. They do not return.

Blowpipes are missile weapons with only a 10 hex range. Darts do 1 die-- 3 points hit damage.

**EGYPT - OLD KINGDOM:** This lasted from approximately 3200 BC - 2350 BC.

Heavy wooden shields covered with hippopotamus hide stop 1 hit and adjust DX -1.

Assegai are heavy spears with copper blades. They are polearms requiring ST of 11, doing damage of 1 die +1.

Bows are equivalent to horse bows, but copper-tipped arrows do only 1 die - 1 point damage.

Crude stone axes are as MELEE hammers.

**EGYPT- NEW KINGDOM:** This lasted from the expulsion of the Hyksos in 1580 BC until the 4th century BC. New Kingdom armies were large, well-organized, well disciplined, consisting of both Egyptian career troops and Nubian mercenaries. Armament was similar to that of the Old Kingdom, although leather armor might be worn. Nubian mercenaries use clubs at DX+1.

**ASSYRIA:** Legendary for their ferocity, they terrorized the world from about 1380 BC - 612 BC. After the 8th Century BC, heavy infantry wore iron-reinforced leather armor which may be considered equal to MELEE chainmail. Before that, they wore breastplates and helms and carried large shields. The helm and breastplates may be considered chainmail, but with MA reduced to 5.

Light infantry carry large wicker shields which stop 1 hit and adjust DX -1.

CHARACTERISTIC ASSYRIAN WEAPONS INCLUDE:

Pikes: These are spears requiring ST 12 and able to extend one extra hex to engage a foe one hex distant, enabling a Charge Attack or polearm defense +2 against a foe who cannot engage the pikeman until he closes (or is himself armed with a pike).

Shortsword and longbow: Light infantry had the pikeman and archer work together. The former kneels in front, pike extended. The latter may fire unobstructed over his head. Both are considered covered by the large wicker shield; the pikeman is also considered equivalent to prone behind a fallen body and the archer considered kneeling be-

hind a fallen body. The pikeman may engage a foe with his pike while kneeling, and may turn to either front hex in his movement phase, but must stand to do anything else.

**PERSIAN INFANTRY:** Eastern armies depended on numerical superiority. Persian infantry between from 6th Century BC were armed with lances, short swords, and bows. An infantry lance requires a ST of 10, does 1 die damage, may be extended one extra hex (as Assyrian pike) or may be thrown. The bow is much larger than a longbow and is fired from kneeling position, braced against the foot. Consider it equivalent to a light crossbow. Persians from 3rd Century BC may wear chainmail.

**ACHEANS:** These are the forerunners of the great Greek civilizations, invading the Greek isles around 2000 BC. They did not use shields or armor and their weaponry is similar to Neolithic equipment. Characteristic weapons include:

Small axes equivalent to MELEE hammers.

Slings and bows equivalent to Neolithic bows, and javelins.

Stone daggers break on a roll of 17 or 18 and, if matched against chainmail or plate, have the same chance of breakage as Neolithic spears.

**GREEK HOPLITES:** The heavy infantry of the Greek city-states fought in densely packed lines protruding past the front line. Hoplites were elite troops - as knights of the feudal era - and extremely well disciplined (unlike knights). By the 7th Century BC, Hoplites were armored with large shields, breastplate, helmet, and greaves. Bronze is a heavy metal armor that may be considered to stop 3 hits but MA is 5 and, except when fighting with the pike in phalanx, DX -4.

The Hoplite pike is double ended. It is long enough to extend *two* extra hexes doing 1 die + 2 points and requiring ST of 12. For game purposes, men in the third line of the phalanx can engage foes adjacent to the front line. Hoplites also carried short swords and daggers.

**PELTASTS:** These were the light troops of Ancient Greece, used as scouts, skirmishers, and flankers. They were armed with small shields, and either javelins or spears. After the 4th Century BC they carried horse bows or slings.

**MACEDONIA:** The inspired strategy of Philip of Macedonia and his son - Alexander the Great - were responsible for Macedonian successes, rather than any technological superiority. Macedonian pikes extend *four* extra hexes, require ST of 13, do 1 die + 2 points of damage, and make up for 1 DX lost for use of armor - so that as with Hoplites the bronze armor adjusts DX only -3. In addition to peltasts, Macedonian pikemen were supported by Scythian archers. These do not wear armor and fire longbows at plus 1 DX.

The Macedonians did use elephants in war. Those who have the WIZARD rules can experiment with this. The Small Dragon counter can be used and rules for engagement or knocking over one hex figures by a four hex figure apply. An elephant has ST of 35, DX of 10, MA of 7, and IQ of 6. Its thick hide stops 3 hits. Its trunk does 2 dice of damage. Against a multi-hex figure the elephant will use tusks rather than trunk of 2 dice + 2 points damage. It will only step on a fallen figure (2 dice damage) or one who has rolled under the elephant to attack its underbelly. This is considered HtH combat except that disengagement is as regular combat.

An elephant can carry a driver and four soldiers. Consider the driver to be directly in the middle, carrying a goad - equivalent to a club - and the soldiers will each be in one hex facing outward with missile weapons. They can only be hit by missiles, pikes or lances from an adjacent hex, or flying creatures. They cannot be engaged in HtH combat except by flying creatures. A soldier who falls off, by forced retreat, incurring 8 points of damage, or if the elephant itself goes down, must roll his own DX on 3 dice. Failure results in taking 1 die - 3 points of damage unstopped by armor.

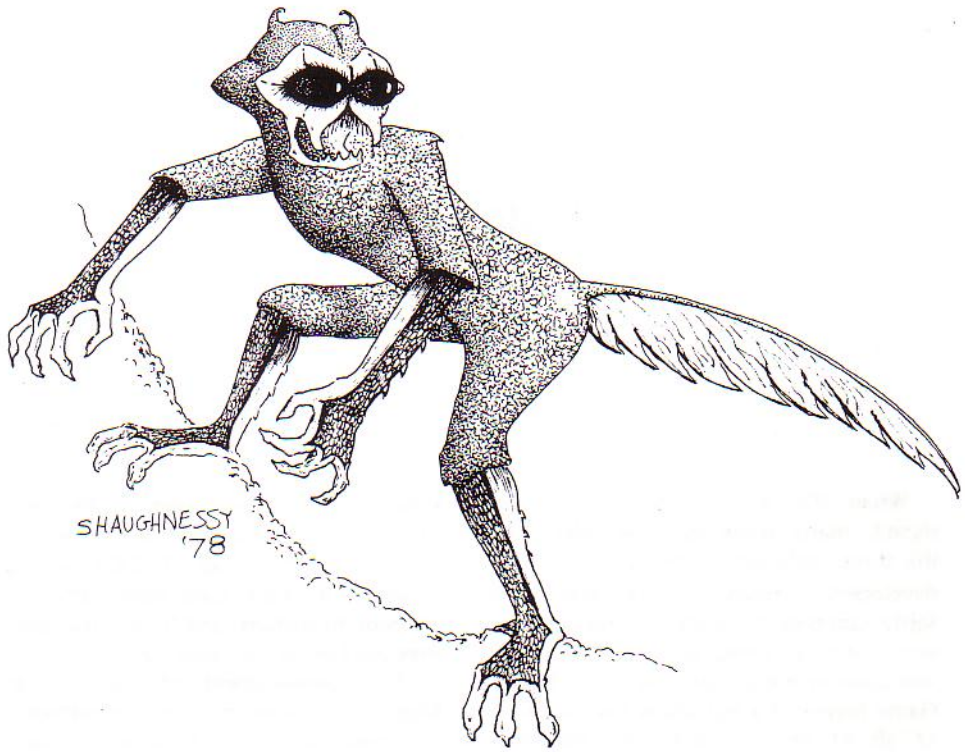
*Note on pikes and lances:* When a weapon is extended beyond the adjacent hex and an opponent engages the pikeman, whether or not the opponent was hit after being charged or charging, the pikeman is at a disadvantage. The next turn in which the pikeman strikes he must "choke up" on the pike, striking by -1 DX for each extra hex the pike was extended. Pikes are not required to be extended to their full length. An opponent striking at a pikeman in phalanx strikes at -1 DX for each rear rank pike projecting into his hex.

# THOSE RIP-OFF BLUES

## (and what to do about them...)

by

## Howard Thompson




Wargaming has mushroomed in popularity since 1971. As it has grown, wargaming has attracted a few unscrupulous persons. Mail order rip-offs have no doubt been around since Ben Franklin established the first postal service. Wargaming is no exception.

By mail order rip-offs, I don't mean to indict legitimate firms offering legitimate products and services. I'm also not pointing my finger at normal postal foul-ups or delays. I'm talking about ordering a game by mail and having nothing from a company six months later, despite several follow-up letters.

There are some firms apparently advertising products they never intend to deliver. They do not acknowledge any correspondence from customers other than cashing a check. THE SPACE GAMER gets letters regularly with complaints about such problems. The list of offenders is small, but rip-off artists hurt wargamers, wargaming, and the legitimate firms.

There are several things you can do to protect yourself when ordering by mail. Always send a check or money order to pay. They can be traced as proof of payment. Never, never, ever send cash. Even an honest game company can do nothing if cash is lost in mailing. When you send a follow-up letter about your order, send it certified mail; this proves you tried to right the problem before bitching elsewhere.

There are federal regulations governing mail order businesses. Your list of rights includes the following:

1. Goods must be shipped by a company within 30 days of receiving your order or within advertised times.
2. You must be offered the option of a refund or an additional waiting period if the time limit in (1) isn't met.
3. A refund must be sent at the end of the second waiting period unless you state a willingness to wait longer.
4. Refunds, except credit purchases, must be handled within seven days.
5. You don't have to accept credit slips; you can always demand money.

If you don't get an order within a reasonable time, there are actions you can take. Reasonable time should allow for truly horrible postal service. Eight weeks is sometimes needed for an order to reach you, even if the company is prompt in getting an order out.

1. The first thing to do is let the company know by letter you haven't received the order. This usually suffices. A second certified letter is advisable if you still have no answer.
2. If the company fails to even acknowledge your problem, as with true rip-offs, you can proceed to complain where it may do some good.
   a. Write to the magazine that carried the advertisement you answered. If they get enough substantiated complaints, the magazine may refuse to carry rip-off ads.
   b. Write to your local postal inspector. Mail fraud may be involved.
   c. Write to the Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Affairs Division, Washington D.C. Federal laws may have been violated.
   d. Write to Direct Mail Advertising Association Inc., 921 National Press Building, Washington, D.C. 20004. The association doesn't like frauds.

Gamers can control rip-off artists by consistent documented complaints. Be sure you have copies of all correspondence and cancelled checks. Be sure you have a realistic complaint. Don't go after firms who merely send you something you decide you don't like. But, when you know you've been cheated, your careful complaints can hurt the defrauder. Don't hesitate to go after them; all wargaming will benefit.

After that, I have to say that almost all wargaming firms take extra pain to satisfy customers. The exceptions are few. But, the buyer who got burned deserves satisfaction. The actions described here can be effective. It will take a number of customers complaining to get effective action. Put your two bits in with the others and something will be done.

THE SPACE GAMER is interested in hearing of complaints you may have. If a documentable pattern exists, TSG may undertake a bit of investigative reporting. Publicity about proven frauds can help give gamers fair warning.

# MORE OPTIONAL RULES FOR ICE WAR

by

Keith Gross

When ICE WAR was originally designed, many more optional rules than the three included in the rulebook were developed. However, ICE WAR is fairly complex for a MicroGame without any optional rules, and the rulesbook and countermix constraints of the MicroGame format did not allow the inclusion of all of them. Moreover, the time needed for adequately playtesting them would have delayed the game's completion by a month or two.

These optional rules do add possibilities for new strategies, and add more of a science-fiction flavor to the game. They are presented for the benefit of players already familar with basic ICE WAR, and desire *something more.*

A word of warning: most of these rules affect play balance, usually in the US's favor. This applies to the Missile Types and US Secrecy optional rules in the original game also. Only players thoroughly familiar with the basic rules should attempt to use *all* of these.

## 21.0 SUBMARINES

**21.1 Types.** The ESA player may purchase attack subs and missile subs. The US player may purchase attack subs and sub transports. The US player may purchase his subs as initial forces units for their full point cost, or as reinforcements for half point cost.

**21.2 Game-Turn Sequence.** Submarine Phases for each player are added to the Game-Turn sequence. These come before the Missile Phase for each player. *During the ESA Submarine Phase;* 1) ESA subs may be committed to the map; 2) Sub combat occurs if the US already has subs on the map; 3) ESA subs are moved; 4) ESA subs may surface or attempt to surface; and 5) Sub transports may load or unload passengers.

**21.3 Commitment of Subs to the Map.** ESA subs may be committed to the map during any ESA Sub Phase of any turn. US initial forces subs may be committed during the US Sub Phase of any turn after release of reinforcements (see 17.3 in rulesbook). When subs are committed, the player simply announces the numbers and types of subs which are entering the map.

**21.4 Sub Combat.** After the player whose turn it is announces the arrival of the new subs, sub combat *must* take place if the opposing player already has subs on the map. If both players have attack subs, the player with fewer attack subs eliminates all of his attack subs and the other player eliminates an equal number. All attack subs are eliminated if the players have an equal number of them. Each surviving attack sub is then exchanged for one enemy sub transport or missile sub, with both the attack sub and its target being eliminated. The owning player chooses which subs to loose, if a choice exists. Attack subs in excess of enemy subs are not eliminated. EXAMPLE: 2 ESA attack subs and 2 ESA missile subs are on the map when 3 US attack subs and 1 US sub transport are committed. First, 2 attack subs are eliminated from each side. Next, the remaining US attack sub and one of the ESA missile subs (the ESA player's choice) are eliminated. One sub transport and one missile sub remain.

**21.5 Sub Movement.** If the player whose turn it is desires some of his subs to be submerged, he places these subs to the side of the map. If he wishes some of his subs to surface, he now places these subs in specific hexes on the map. Subs may never be placed in land hexes or *any hex within 5 hexes of land* (the water is too shallow). And subs already on the map may be moved an unlimited distance, observing the above restriction, during their own Sub Phase. Attack subs should always be kept submerged, to the side of the map.

**21.6 Surfacing.** Subs in water hexes (converted ice hexes) are now considered surfaced. Subs in ice hexes surface only if a 1, 2, or 3 is rolled on a die. Subs which are not surfaced may not unload or load units or launch missiles, but may still be attacked with missiles (see 12.10). Subs which were already surfaced and did not move are still considered surfaced.

**21.7 Unloading/Loading.** US sub transports may now unload either or both of their passengers. One of the two units may be transported by the other. The passengers must be unloaded in the hex that the sub transport is in. They may not be unloaded if the terrain is prohibited to them unless they are being transported by a unit that can enter the terrain. EXAMPLE: A US sub transport carrying an infantry and a VERTOL surfaces in a water hex. The infantry by itself may not unload on the water hex, but the VERTOL may be unloaded carrying the infantry. Units unloaded from sub transports may move and attack normally the turn they are unloaded. After unloading, a sub transport may load friendly units in its hex up to its transport capacity (2 units of any type).

**21.8 Missile Subs.** Each ESA missile sub which is surfaced may launch one missile during the ESA Missile Phase, in the same manner as ESA missile sleds, provided it is carrying missiles. As with missile sleds, missiles must be purchased. A missile sub may carry an unlimited number of missiles, but may launch *only* one per turn. Missile subs may not launch missiles at their own hex. However, surface units in missile sub hex (see 21.9) do not prevent the launching of missiles.

**21.9 Surface Units.** Non-sub units do not affect the movement of subs in any way. Subs do not affect the movement of non-sub units. Subs may occupy the same hex as enemy non-sub units. Normal combat never occurs between subs and surface units, though they may

launch missiles at each other (see 21.8 and 21.10).

**21.10 Missile Hits on Subs.** Whenever a missile hits a hex containing surfaced or submerged subs, all subs in the hex are eliminated along with other units. ESA missile subs may *not* fire anti-missiles at US missiles from Orbital Weapons Platforms.

**21.11 Terrain Conversion.** Subs which surface in an ice hex do not convert the hex to water. Neither surfaced nor submerged subs are affected if they occupy ice hexes that are converted to water.

**21.12 ESA Secrecy.** Hidden ESA units are located if they enter a hex containing a US or ESA sub. Discovered ESA subs do *not* count towards the 3 units needed for the release of US reinforcements (see 17.3 in rulesbook).

**21.13 Sub Reinforcements.** US subs designated as reinforcements do not have to roll for arrival after release of reinforcements (see 17.0 in rulesbook). US sub transports may arrive already loaded with other reinforcements. Passengers do not have to roll for arrival either.

## 22.0 AMPHIBIOUS COMMANDOES

The US player may purchase amphibious commando units (also known as Sub *Marines*. . .Sorry) as either initial forces or reinforcements. These are normal combat units which may enter tundra, ice, or water hexes but not mud.

## 23.0 SPACE ASSAULT TROOPS

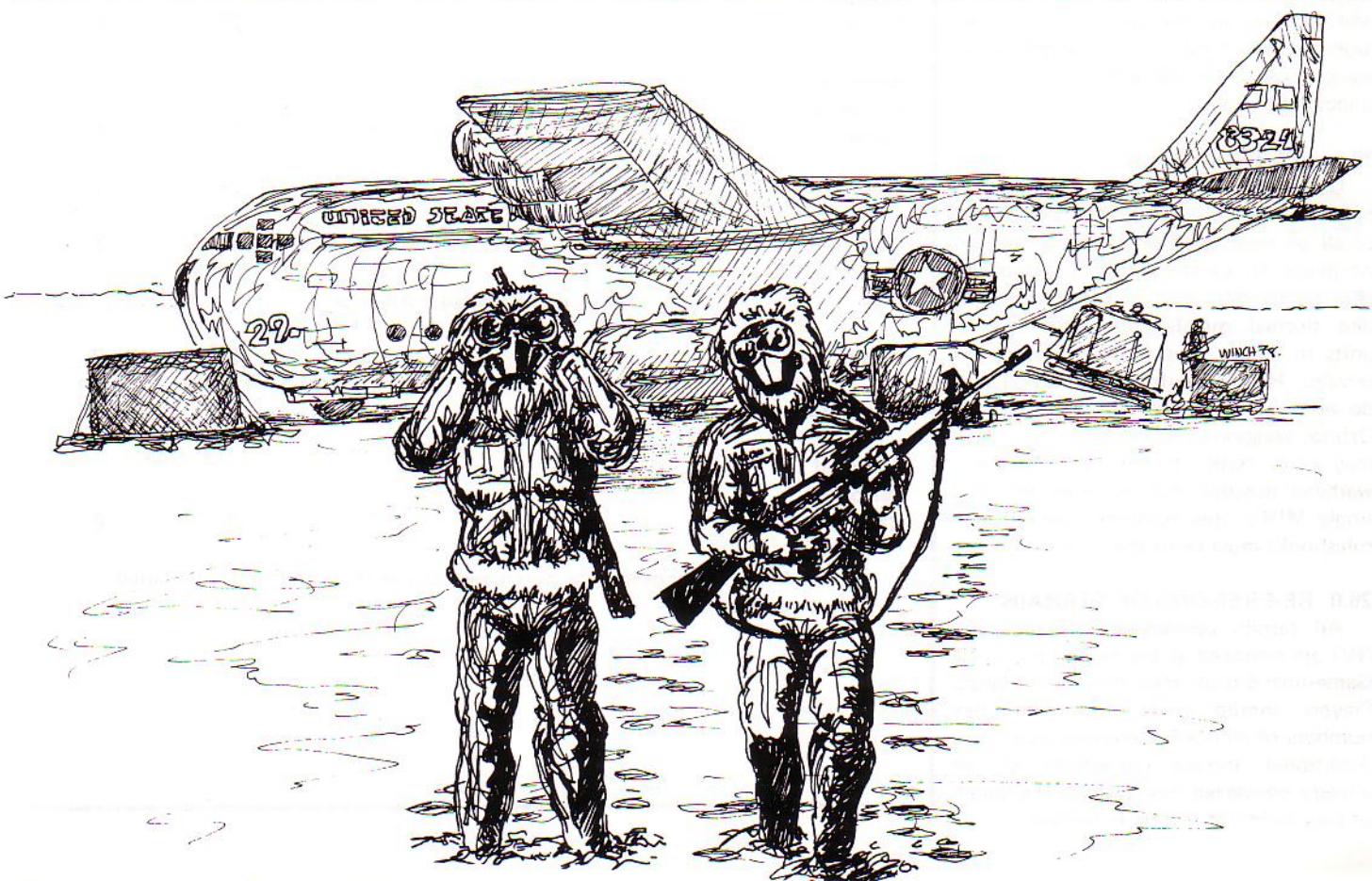
Space Assault troops are space station based, elite, laser-armed US troops delivered to the battle area by space shuttle landing craft. They may be purchased as reinforcements only, 2 points each. Like other reinforcements, Space Assault troops may not arrive until release of reinforcements (see 17.3 in rulesbook). However, no die roll is necessary for their arrival. Also, Space Assault troops may land in any hex on the map, not just Deadhorse. They may not land adjacent to, or in the same hex as, ESA units. Space Assault troops always arrive during the US Reinforcement Phase. Like other reinforcements, their arrival may be voluntarily delayed. They may move and attack normally during the turn they land. They are normal ground units with Infantry type mobility after landing.

## 24.0 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS

APCs are normal combat units with Tank mobility and a transport capability. Each US APC unit may transport 1 infantry, outpost, or recon sled unit. Each ESA APC may transport 1 infantry. US APCs may be transported by hovercraft, but not VERTOLS. ESA APCs may be transported by hovercraft transports and sled transports. A loaded APC unit may be transported normally by a single transport. However, the APC's passenger may not be unloaded from the hovercraft or sled transport unless the APC is also unloaded. An APC may load in the same Movement Phase that it is loaded and may unload in the same Movement Phase that it is unloaded, even though it may not move.

## 25.0 COMMUNICATIONS JAMMING

The US player may purchase a Communications Jamming Satellite (Jamsat) for 2 points or more in his initial selection of forces. Jamsats may not be purchased as reinforcements. The ESA player may protect against Jamsats by paying more than the usual 1 point for their Command Sled. During any phase of any Game-turn, the US player may activate his Jamsat by announcing to the ESA player that he is doing so. He also announces how many points the Jamsat was purchased for. If the Jamsat's value is greater than that of the ESA Command Sled, Loss of Command effects (see 16.0 in rulesbook) are suffered by the ESA for the remainder of the game. If the Jamsat's value is less than or equal to that of the Command Sled, nothing happens. The ESA player does not tell the US player the value of the Command Sled, only whether or not the jamming attempt is successful.



## 26.0 OUT OF COMMAND ESA HIDDEN MOVEMENT

All ESA units, not just the Command Sled, have infrared screens, but must still keep radio silence to remain hidden. ESA units which enter the map not stacked with the Command Sled may be removed from the map and moved secretly, but they must move according to pre-written orders. After both players have selected forces, but before the US player sets up, the ESA player may write the hex number in which each out of command hidden unit will end each of the first six turns. These plots may never be changed, even if the unit is in the same hex as the Command Sled during some point during its plotted movement. A hidden unit is revealed when one of the following conditions is met:

A. As with the Command Sled; see 13.2, cases A.-G. in rulesbook.
B. It deviates from its plotted path.
C. Automatically at the beginnning of Game-turn 7, unless it is stacked with the Command Sled at that time and both the unit and the Command Sled are still hidden.

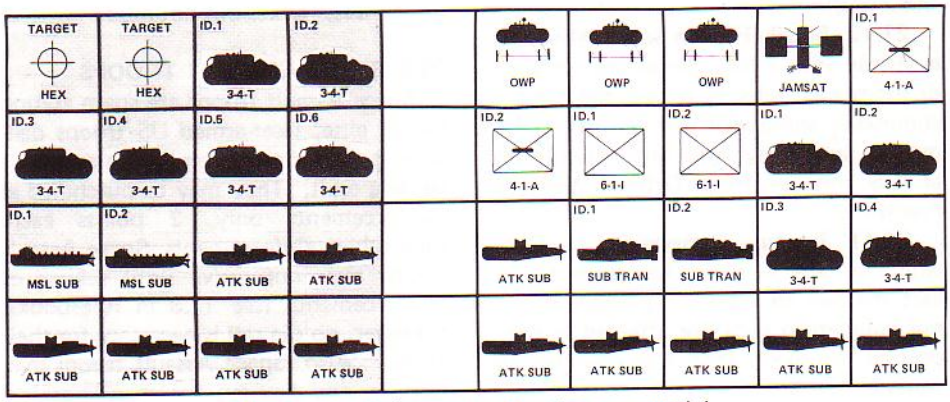
Note that a US combat unit blocking the plotted path of movement will cause the hidden ESA unit to be located, since the ESA unit must either deviate from its path or enter the US unit's zone of control. When several alternate routes exist between a unit and the hex it is plotted to move to, the route should be indicated on the plot. Otherwise, the unit will go by the shortest and most direct route. If *any* of the shortest routes are blocked by a US unit, the ESA unit is located.

## 27.0 NEUTRON BOMBS

During the initial selection of forces, both players may designate some, none, or all of their missiles as having neutron warheads. No extra point cost is involved. Hits by missiles with neutron warheads, like normal missile hits, eliminate all units in a hex, but do not convert the terrain. Hits by neutron-warhead missiles do *not* eliminate submarines. A single Orbital Weapons Platform or missile sled may carry both neutron- and standard-warhead missiles, but all warheads of a single MIRV (see optional rule 19.3 in rulesbook) must be of the same type.

## 28.0 RE-FREEZING OF TERRAIN

All terrain conversion markers (CONV) are removed at the beginning of the Game-turn 6 turns after they were placed. Players should write down the hex numbers of all hexes converted each turn. Additional terrain conversion of an already converted hex extends the length of time before it reverts to normal.




(Permission to photocopy counters- no resale)

### ADDITIONS TO UNITS CHART

**United States**

| TYPE | Combat Strength | Movement Factor | Mobility Type | Point Cost | Number Available |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Submarine Transport** | – | – | Sub | 3 | 2 |
| **Attack Sub** | – | – | Sub | 2 | 6 |
| **Amphibious Commandoes** | 4 | 1 | A | 2 | 2 |
| **Space Assault Troops** | 6 | 1 | I | 2* | 2 |
| **Armored Personnel Carrier** | 3 | 4 | T | 2 | 4 |
| **Jamsat** | – | – | – | 2+ | 1 |
| **OWP** | – | – | – | – | 3 |

**Eurasian Socialist Alliance**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Missile Sub** | – | – | Sub | 2 | 2 |
| **Attack Sub** | – | – | Sub | 1½ | 6 |
| **Armored Personnel Carrier** | 3 | 4 | T | 2 | 6 |

*Space Assault Troops may be purchased only as reinforcements; indicated cost is not halved.

# The Hazards of WARGAMING

by

***Mike Crane***

In this day and age of super-technology in wargaming with more and more super-large, super-complex, and super-realistic (a point which I disagree with) wargames, does anyone actually ever play one? Can anyone even understand the rules? What really happens when an unsuspecting gamer buys a game, opens it up and is actually believing that he can play it? But even more importantly, what happens when that gamer invites his buddies over and they actually try and play it? To find out, let's look at one wargame session with me and my friends, when we foolishly tried to play a wargame. Note that all names have been changed to protect the parties involved.

June 1, 1977: I(Mike Crane) buy a copy of new best selling wargame by Semi-Sun International: Red Sun Rising Over The Blue MuMu Sunset.

June 2: I begin to carefully decipher the rules which have been cleverly coded to contain such un-decipherable words like rigid, semi-fixable, autonomous,semi-active, secondary zones of control.

June 3-6 I pass the rulebook around to my friends hoping that they will somehow understand the rules so we can get together a gaming session.

June 7, 6:00 p.m.: I decide to have a test run of the game and call up three of my friends.

June 7, 7:00 p.m.: A spirited discussion takes place over which of MuMu's sixty-two odd scenarios we should play (the designer of the game neglected to indicate which scenario is the standard one). Finally we decide to vote on it.

June 7, 7:05 p.m.: The secret ballot was then finished and it was discovered that someone had stuffed the ballot box. After much argument we decided to vote again.

June 7, 7:20 p.m.: After proper security measures had been taken (making my dining room look like the main NATO arsenal) the votes were cast and counted, and the scenario "Sun Over MuMu" was chosen (thank god the vote wasn't tied!).

June 7, 8:00 p.m.: Set up for the scenario is completed and the play starts.

June 7, 8:10 p.m.: Frank discovers that Alex has stacked over the three-and-a-half MuMu limit and since Alex was the first to set up we all must set up again.

June 7, 9:00 p.m.: Second set up is completed. Play starts again.

June 7, 9:30 p.m.: First turn is completed by the time I discover that Alex has violated rule 62.352 ( on the use of secondary dummy units) and because these units were helping Alex achieve first turn victories we all must set up again.

June 7, 10:00 p.m.: Third set up is completed after triple checking it and Alex announces that he will kill himself if we have to set up again (a statement which is greeted with cheers from Frank and Tim).

June 7, 10:35 p.m.: I use the special "MuMu quick fire under blue sun" rule, but Frank allegates that I have misused it, a charge which I then denied of course! Since I had denied his allegations a spirited discussion (more like an armed brawl!) takes place.

June 7, 11:00 p.m.: The "Discussion" is resolved in my favor, but Frank, allegating that this is only because I own the game, walks out--leaving a sizable number of un-commanded units on the board. I then suggested that we use the optional inter-polated random control module, an idea that is greeted with applause (being the first time a quick solution has been found in the game)

June 7, 12:00 a.m.: Alex is found to be using his si-placer pad to his advantage (in other words-he's cheating!).

June 7, 12:05 a.m.: I kick Alex out, throw the game in the trash, and go out with Tim and get drunk (incidently the hangover the next morning was ten times more fun than playing the game!).

# STARSHIPS and SPACEMEN

## :designer's notes

by

LEONARD H. KANTERMAN, M.D.

*Author's preface: I had intended to write an article for TSG outlining the design philosophy that guided the development of STARSHIPS AND SPACEMEN in any case. However, after reading the vicious, biased review of the game in TSG no.18, I felt compelled to offer an alternative viewpoint. While I am naturally prejudiced in favor of my own work, I hope readers will be able to form a more objective opinion of the game after this rebuttal.*

When I set out to design STARSHIPS AND SPACEMEN, I had two major goals in mind. The first was to produce what would be, to my knowledge, the first science-fiction role playing game, as an option to the medieval milieu of DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS. S&S was developed concurrently, but independently of TRAVELLER and METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA. I had no foreknowledge of what these games would cover, and, even since their publication, I have spent little time in perusing them. The vagaries of finding a suitable publisher, and then getting the game from the sheafs of notes in my apartment into an organized form, and finally the technical difficulties of printing the game and arranging the artwork, all resulted in about a year's delay from the time the game was first conceived and playtested.

My second goal was to present a set of rules that were simple, concise, clearly organized, and easy to learn and play, yet which covered a wide variety of situations, and also corrected some of the deficiencies I had found in the original D&D. Although this was quite a tall order, I felt my previous experience in game design would enable me to deliver. (I was co-designer of SDC's CROMWELL and designed a game called TICONDEROGA on the French and Indian War that was due to be published by Morningside Games before they went bankrupt.)

The setting that I specifically *chose* for the game was the world of TV's Star Trek. This basic premise seems to have been what upset the reviewer of the game in TSG so much. I did not intend to hide my intentions at all. In the Designer's Notes in the game it clearly states what my assumptions were. Indeed, my publisher and I debated obtaining the rights from Paramount and calling the game Star Trek but this was not economically feasible. We even attempted to alert potential buyers of the Star Trek tie-in with the tag line "the final frontier" on the cover. It seems unjust to me that, having taken offense with the basic premise of the game, the reviewer felt qualified to make substantive comments about the game itself. It is akin to condemning MIDDLE EARTH as a game because one does not like LORD OF THE RINGS.

I chose to use Star Trek as a base for the design of S&S for two purposes. Most importantly, I felt that Star Trek was a well-known phenomenon with wide popular appeal. Therefore, the "rationale" and general course of play would be easily comprehended by players of the game. Prolonged explanations and rationalizations, as are employed in many other science fiction games, would not be necessary, and the gamemaster would not be faced with huge gaps in the designer's intentions that he must divine before creating his corner of the galaxy. As an extra bonus, S&S has proven to be particularly well-suited to introducing novices and nongamers into the world of gaming; all the gamesmaster has to say is, "this is a role-playing game based on Star Trek" and everybody knows what he's talking about and can get into playing the game. My own experiences and those of my publisher, Scott Bizar of Fantasy Games Unlimited, at his wargame store have borne this out.

Secondly, I am not a science fiction writer. If I were, I certainly would not be wasting my time and effort in something that pays as poorly as game design. However, I realized my limitations and utilized a basic concept that would be familiar to many people. Unfortunately, some of my colleagues in the world of game design do not realize their own limitations, resulting in games like: STARFORCE, for which Simonsen developed a beautiful story, an exquisite map and a three-dimensional movement system, but which plays like Space Checkers; WHITE BEAR AND RED MOON, which has more unstated assumptions and missing pieces than a jigsaw puzzle; or SWORDS AND SORCERY, the childish fantasy of Greg Costikyan and Eric Goldberg where Killer Penguins and SS Divisions run amuck amid the dwarves and orcs.

Like many things, science fiction is a matter of taste. My favorite author may be your bane. I think that a brief inspection of the profit-and-loss statements of Star Wars or Planet of the Apes show that many more people disagree with the reviewer's conceptions of successful science fiction than agree with him. In the design of S&S I attempted to suggest that the gamesmaster's world should not be bound by the conventions of Star Trek, but could easily be expanded to incorporate other elements. I included the details for some of my own pet ideas, but I never intended these to exclude

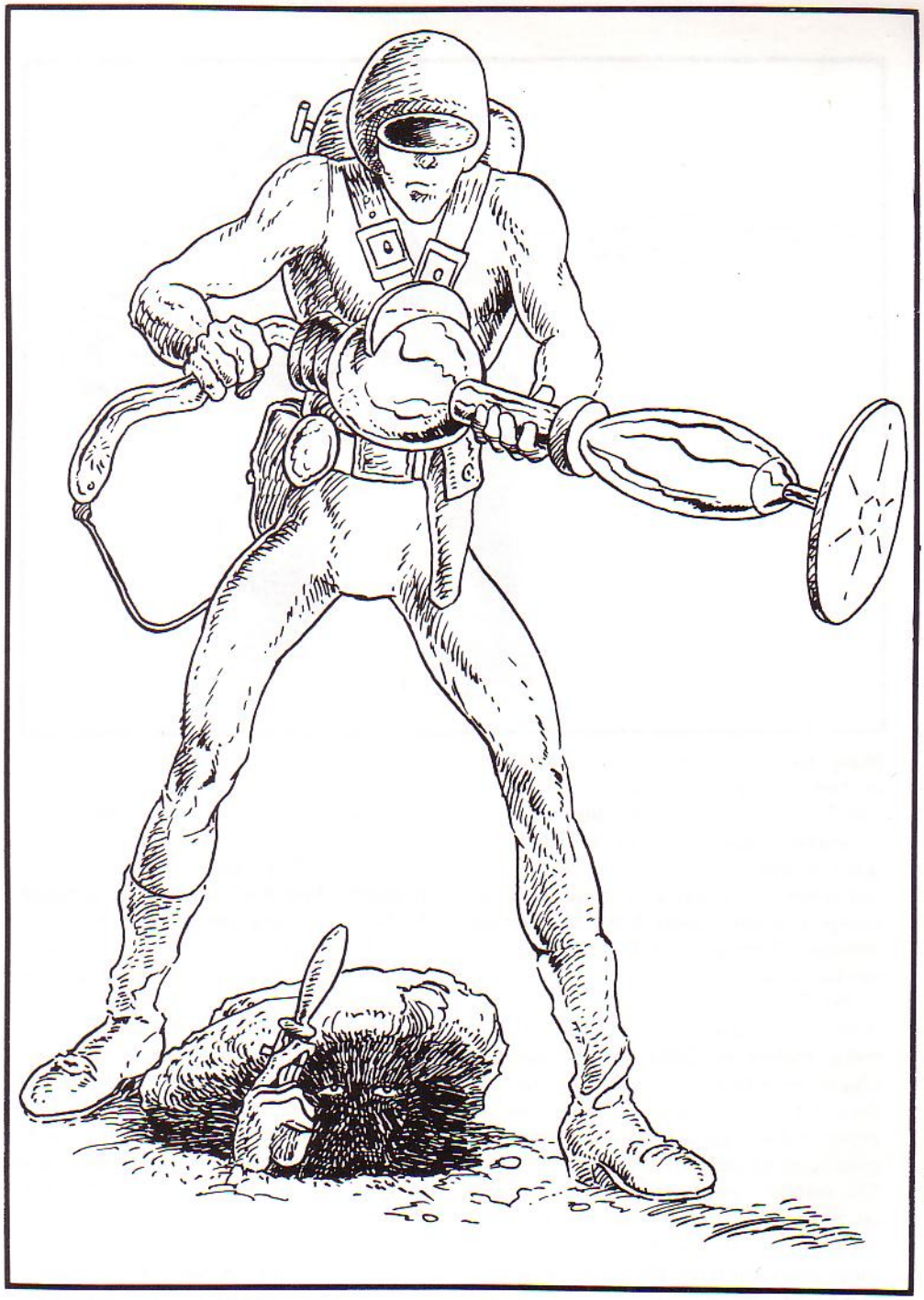
other concepts. The reviewer was dismayed because I neglected to include some of his particular favorites. My answer to him, and to anyone else who reads the rules, is to include them yourself! With a modicum of intelligence and imagination, a would-be gamemaster should be able to follow the guidelines I laid out for various species of fauna and flora in translating elements from a particular science fiction medium into game terms. In fact, almost every title I've read since publication of S&S contains aspects that would lend themselves into incorporation. If a potential buyer of S&S feels cheated that I have not included every conceivable creature, I need only refer him to the original D&D, which went through a variety of supplements and an entire design overhaul, but still engenders new species in the various fan magazines.

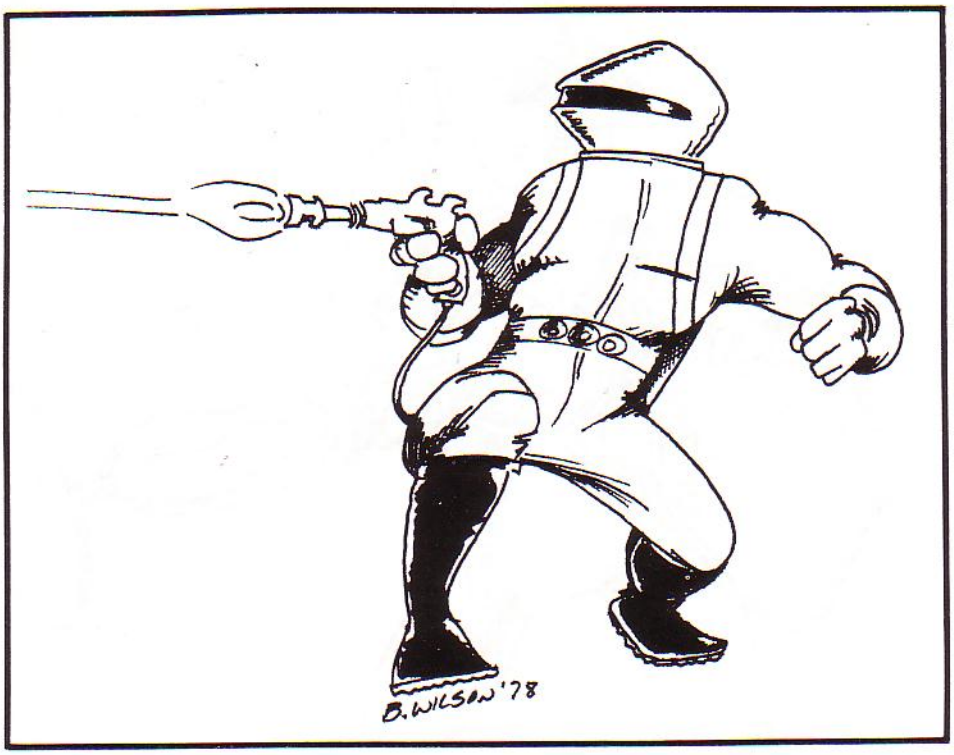
There were several design "points" that I wanted to make in S&S that I felt were lacking in the original D&D. While the new Basic and Advanced D&D rules do address many of the deficiencies in the rules, they do so only at a considerable expense to the player. S&S can stand alone, although additional material will be forthcoming via FGU's Wargaming magazine. Among the "points" I made in S&S are the following:

(1) I devised three systems for character generation that allow both the player and the referee some input into the shaping of the character. How many times has Lady Luck failed you by giving your 18-strength fighter a constitution or dexterity of 3? I for one always seem to roll up mediocre characters who seem more at home sweeping the barn than exploring a castle, and have doubts about the honesty of a player whose character has more than 1 score of 16, 17, or 18. My favorite method for assigning attributes is where the player picks what value he assigns each die roll to as he rolls it. This way, when a player obtains a good score (of say 14), he must decide whether to apply it to his character's prime requisite or hold out for something better. When the ability modifications for race and sex are added, there is a wide range of characters available for play.

(2) One point I always found disturbing with the original D&D was that a character could not improve with experience. It seems hard to believe that a 10th level magic-user has the same intelligence he had as an apprentice. BUNNIES AND BURROWS (another Fantasy Games role-playing system, based on WATERSHIP DOWN) addressed this by offering a "potential" which could not change, as well as a "level" which improved with experience for each ability. This was too complicated for my liking, so in S&S characters can improve their ratings with each promotion via the experience system. I divided the abilities into "inborn" attributes, which couldn't be improved (like physical strength or charisma), and "acquired" ones, which could improve (like marksmanship and intelligence). Since a character can choose which ability he will garner his bonus in, he can further shape his character's development.

(3) In D&D, the only attribute which did improve with experience was hit points. This seems somewhat ludicrous; the human body is able to absorb only so much damage without collapse. I never found the D&D explanation that a character was more able to dodge hits quite satisfactory. The D&D system also has the unfortunate aspect that beginning characters are overly vulnerable to the slightest danger. In S&S, I grouped the physical attributes of Strength, Constitution, and Hits into one rating, which, as an inborn ability, could not be improved. As such, all characters have the same vulnerability regardless of level of experience. I felt that this decision was justified by the technology level of the game. A hit from a laser gun seems just as






likely to kill an admiral as an ensign. In fact, a Star Trek purist could argue that, based on the show, *any* hit from an energy weapon should be fatal. To grant greater flexibility, in the game most characters can stand 2 or 3 hits from an energy weapon if these hits score average damage. With poor luck, the weaponry can be quite deadly.

(4) The high number of hit points that most higher level characters have tended make melees in D&D long, drawn-out affairs, with both parties hacking away as their hit points slowly dwindle over an interminable period unless magic is employed to radically alter the outcome. The combat system of S&S is designed to be swift and decisive, with most melees decided in a few rounds. The high damage potential from the game's weapons, combined with the fixed level of damage that can be absorbed, resolve fire combat rapidly. The only mitigating factors are personal screens, which help dissipate damage. (In one game, two characters with a screen knocked out a small enemy base with ten times their number.) Close combat resolution is made decisive by the "stun" result, which leaves a combatant somewhat hindered in his ability to respond in further rounds. In addition, there is a morale consideration, related to casualities sustained and the leader's charisma.

(5) The experience point system is tied to a series of USN related promotions. No longer will a player have to wonder what a "myrmidon" or "thematurgist" is; he is a lieutenant or commander or captain. The early promotions are easily attained, while the more advanced ones are successively more difficult. The game is designed for relatively low level characters, although higher level ones can employ the more useful and potent items of equipment. (Equipment in the game is in a sense "loaned out" from headquarters, with a character's equipment allowance concomittant with his experience, and thus his chance to return it intact.) Although the promotions scale does go up to 12th level (Admiral-in-Chief), the highest ranks are limited to command branch only, and most positions above 8th or 9th level would be at a desk job. The dangers of space exploration and combat are reserved for more expendable personages.

(6) Also regarding the experience system, S&S is probably one of the least competitive games on the market. Each class of character has its own means of advancement; military officers gain for combat experience while science officers gain for scientific discoveries (which can lead to interesting situations when the military wants to kill off a new creature, but the scientists want to capture it.) There is no money in the game. This lack of competition tends to make S&S an enjoyable experience for people new to gaming, especially women.

(7) S&S is a non-sexist game. Unlike D&D, where women tend to be stereotyped into beautiful-but-helpless princesses or fighting amazons, women come into a full role. S&S recognizes that, while the sexes are different, women are not in any sense inferior. While women lose somewhat in physical strength, their gain in charisma and psionic power more than makes up for this. The loss of physical strength is of less consequence in a game with energy weapons, which can be weilded by all. In fact, women characters are probably better overall than their male counterparts and, in our playtest group, one of the co-commanders was female. For the ultimate in sexual equality, there is a *trisexual* race.

(8) There is an entire subsystem of play that enables players to try to divulge information from the gamesmaster, via the mechanism of the ship's computer. Since the computer interprets questions *literally*, and is limited to "yes", "no", or "insufficient data" as responses, the players learn about the nature of logic in learning how to phrase questions to obtain meaningful knowledge.

(9) With deference to my flights of fancy such as flying dogs (which I postulate in the context of low-gravity planets where less force is required to lift a given mass), the game does incorporate several scientific lessons. The game is squarely based on the metric system, with approximate conversion tables offered in the rules. While there is some speculative science in the game (namely, the effects of atmosphere, gravity, temperature, and radiation on life forms), other elements such as the space amoeba (with its semi-permeable membrane, mitochondria, and lysozomes) could be straight of a college-level Cell Biology course.

In summary, players of S&S will find a refreshing change of pace from gloomy caverns and castles. In a relatively simple set of rules based on a well-known and popular medium, players can experience a wide range of adventures in environments ranging from deep space to planetary surface, or even throughout time travel. These components make the game attractive to people with no prior gaming experience. Judging the game for what it intended to accomplish, I feel it is a success, and would be a welcome addition for anyone with an interest in science fiction, role-playing, or both.

# NEWS & PLUGS

## GAMING CONVENTIONS:

**WINTER WAR VI:** (Jan 19-21) University of Illinois, Urbana, Illnois. Tournaments include D&D, Diplomacy, miniatures and various board games. All tournaments have a $1 entry fee. Memberships: $2 for the three days or $1 per day. Info: Alan Conrad, 2215 S. First, no. 103, Champaign, IL 61820.

**WARCON V:** (Feb 2-4) Texas A&M Campus, College Station, Texas. Tournaments include Kingmaker, D&D, Ogre, Stellar Conquest, Ice War, armored and naval miniatures, and several other board games. Memberships: $2.50 in advance, $3.50 at the door for the three days, or $1.50 per day. Info: Edward Tatom, 410 Dunn, College Station, TX 77843.

**DUNDRACON IV:** (Feb 17-19) Villa Hotel, San Mateo, California. Seminars, films, computers, tournaments, demonstrations, and miniatures. Convention staff has a record of good cons. Memberships: $8.50 to Feb 1, $10 after. Info: DudDraCon IV, 386 Alcatraz, Oakland, CA 94618.

**GENCON SOUTH '79:** (Feb 17-19) Jacksonville Hilton, Jacksonville, FL. Cowford Dragoons host this con, and the Dragoons put on a nice con for all of us south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Con covers all facets of wargaming. Info: Carl Smith, Jr., 5333 Santa Monica Blvd. N., Jacksonville, FL 32207.

**MON CON III:** (March 30 to April 1) Conference Center, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV. A combination SF and wargaming con, which will feature guests Joe Haldeman and Marc Miller. Info: Mon Con III, Conference Center, WV University, Morgantown, WV 26506.

## CLUB MEETINGS:

Mid-Columbia Wargaming Society of Richland, Washington centers their activities around D&D, Traveller, Boot Hill and other rp games. They hold regular tournaments that include AH and S&T games along with SF and fantasy games. The MCWS meets on Sundays, and interested persons should contact George Laking, 1404 Thayer Drive, ph. 946-4751 or Mike Faletti, 2231 Enterprise Drive, ph. 375-0681.

The Trake Gaming Society is expanding its membership by playing a pbm game with anyone, anywhere. The pbm game is a fantasy game. For information about this game or the club's meetings contact Vincent Fredrick, Rt. 2, Box 332-J, Benton Arkansas 72015.

## SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS:

**WISCON 3:** (Feb 2-4) Wisconsin Center, Madison, WI. GoHs: Suzy McKee Charnas and John Varley, Memberships $5 to Jan 15, $7 after. WisCon is becoming a very important con due to its emphasis on the social aspects of SF. An excellent con put on by some very fine people. Info: WisCon 3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701.

**FORTCON:** (Feb 9-11) Fort Collins, Colorado. GoH: James Gunn. Mem: $6. Gunn, with his academic credits in the SF field, is always an interesting guest of honor and speaker. Info: Fort Con, CSU Student Center, Box 407, Ft. Collins, CO 80523.

**BOSKONE XVI:** (Feb 16-18) Sheraton-Boston Hotel. GoH: Frank Herbert. Mem: $8 to Jan 15, $10 after. One of the best East Coast cons around. Con staff is professional almost to the point of being machine like. The art show is always great. Info: NESFA, Box G, MIT Br. PO, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Fifth Assemblee of The Friends of the English Regency: (March 10-11) Sheraton Townhouse, Los Angeles, CA. The Friends are interested in the Regency Period of England (1800-1820). Membership $22. Info: Friends of the English Regency, 5228 Miles Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.

**AGGIECON X:** (March 29- April 1) Texas A&M campus, College Station, TX. GoH: Theodore Sturgeon, Guest Artist: Boris. Mem: $5 till March 16, $6 after. The best SF con in Texas, fine facilities, good con staff, and lots of quality films. Info: AggieCon X, Memorial Student Center, Box 5718, College Station, TX 77844.

**LUNACON '79:** (March 29- April 1) Sheraton Inn at LaGuardia, New York City. GoH: Ron Goulart. Mem: $7.50 to March 15, $9.50 after. Info: LunaCon '79, c/o Walter Cole, 1171 East 8th St., Brooklyn, NY 11230.

**AMBERCON:** (April 6-8) Wichita Royale, Wichita, KS. GoHs: Roger Zelazny, Richard Delap, Wilson Tucker. Mem: $5. Info: Gordon Garb, 505 N. Rock Rd. no. 909, Wichita KS 67206.

**BALTICON 13:** (April 13-15) Hunt Valley Inn, Baltimore, MD. Mem: $5 in advance, $7 at the door. Info: Baltimore SF Society, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203.

**PENULTICON:** (May 25-28) Cosmopolitan Hotel, Denver, CO. GoHs: C.J. Cherryh, Samuel Delany, Ed Bryant. Mem: $10. Info: Penulticon, Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211.

**JUST IMAGICON:** (May 25-27) Holiday Inn Rivermont, Memphis, Tennessee. GoHs: L. Sprague de Camp, Kelly Freas. Mem: $10 till April 1, $15 after. Info: Louis Armor, 4475 Martha Cole, Memphis, Tenn. 38118.

**BYOB—CON 9:** (May 25-27) Heritage Inn, Kansas City, MO. GoHs: Karl Edward Wagner, Andrew Offutt. Mem: $8 till May 1, $10 after. Info: Byob-Con 9, c/o 3720 Jefferson, Kansas City, MO 64111.

# LETTERS

## DEAR EDITOR,

I have no objection to constructive criticism on S&S, because the game could certainly be a lot better (and if there had been a year more and a larger budget it would be). Nor do I object when the game is praised for reasons I feel may be weaknesses rather than strengths. The game is, after all, to be perceived by the buyer as anything he wishes. But when a reviewer misses the entire point of a game, I feel that I should address the matter.

Firstly, the errata to the game is now available. All the "missing" units are to be taken from nationalities not in play, which the reviewer seems to have figured out.

Secondly, it was probably not an extremely wise move including as much humor as Greg and I did in the game. While we knew that we would offend the "Tolkien is Ghod" faction, and a lot of people who felt they wished their fantasy to be serious, the amount of humor included in the game may have been too much. I honestly do not know one way or another at this point.

However, Mr. Ritchie's review is not so much a critique of the game as a game, but rather as an idea. Granted, SWORDS AND SORCERY is definitely not Mr. Ritchie's perfect fantasy game, but then S&S was never intended to be that. S&S was fed-back as a playable game with a considerable amount of tongue-in-cheek. Included in the suggestion was a clear statement that the game would borrow almost exclusively from standard mythologies (or "Tolkien rip-off characters" if you will, since Tolkien "ripped off" from almost every standard mythology). Once those parameters were set, Greg (Costikyan) and I worked within them to satisfy the criteria.

From the sales of the game (which prove nothing artistically), and the Game Rating (which proves little), the game has succeeded, and quite well at that. From the reviews, though, it is a mixed success. The main reason for this state of affairs is that most reviewers who review the game unfavorably are not content to review the game on its merit as a game, but on its premise. This would be fine if they attacked the rationale for being poorly written, or any number of reasons other than that of "this is not the correct way to do a fantasy game."

Mr. Ritchie goes on to make a snide remark of SPI people in general being wrapped up in their historical games to the point that they cannot treat a fantasy game properly. Hmmph! Greg and I may not be big name fans, but we certainly have had a thorough schooling in fantasy long before we ever began work on S&S. The two of us have spent many long hours discussing and reading fantasy, quite apart from playing fantasy games.

As for Mr. Ritchie's conception of a proper fantasy game being produced, I have little hope. One skill difficult to master is the art of fantasy writing, and another skill difficult to master is that of designing and developing games. I have yet to see an effective combination of the two, and certainly will not pretend that I am the one capable of meshing the two. When the gaming field gets to the point where it can afford to pay a reasonably known author (Poul Anderson and Jack Vance being my personal first choices) to write a story not for a game, but one which a game could be made from, then Mr. Ritchie's game will be produced. The only glimmer of hope on the horizon, though, is the possibility of Jack Chalker's excellent "Well of Souls" (which comes complete with hex-map of his world) trilogy being simulated.

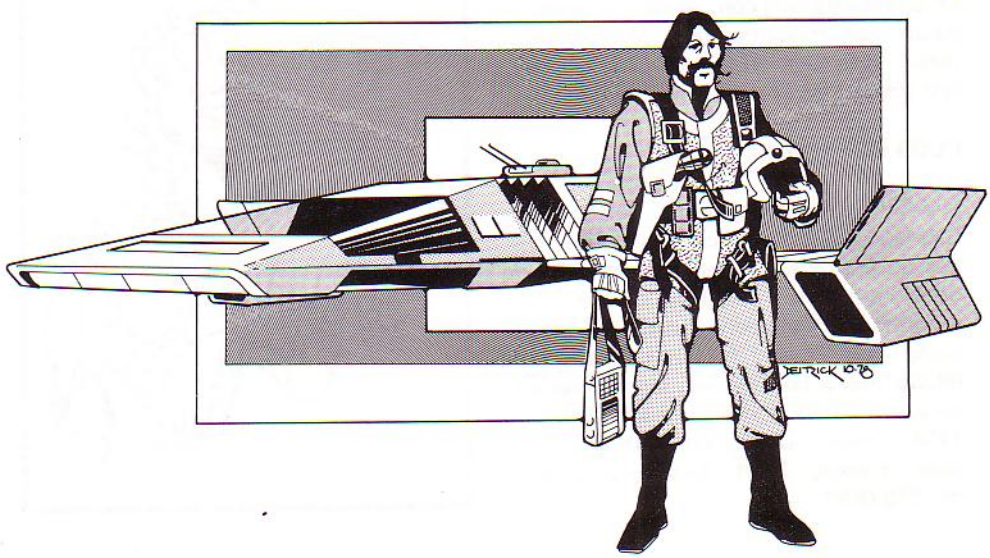
Eric Goldberg
New York, NY

After reading TSG no.19 cover to cover and concluding it has been your best to date (heard that one before?), I turned back to the SWORDS AND SORCERY reviews. Although I have only played the army scenarios (just about all of them), I would say that my opinion is reflected by David Butler's review. But I must take issue with Ritchie's review. He used a lot of space to say he didn't like it because he could not get into it for it reminded him of a lot of other games. That's unfortunate. He is missing a truly exciting, challenging and around here, popular game. The army game system is worth the price alone.

Ritchie's whole argument rests on what he feels is a multi-idea rip-off of other games and the designer/developers being "cute" cute. I feel he missed the whole underlying idea of the game, which is "cute" sarcastic. SPI seems to do a good job of lampooning the whole S&S genre without dragging the game into the muck. The game itself is playable and at times extremely challenging. This is due primarily to the good and fairly simple system of sun phases, giving magic users "up" and "down" times and the random assignment of player phases in a turn. Added to this is a good diplomacy set up where allies (made during the game) move in the same phase and diplomats try to sway neutrals to a favored side. With two to six players, nothing is a forgone conclusion in even the most seemingly stacked scenarios.

To me, it's the mechanics of the game, the amount of freedom to the players to make decisions and in this case, the amount of psychological diplomacy envolved that I give this high marks in game playing.

Jack Wells II
Seattle, WA



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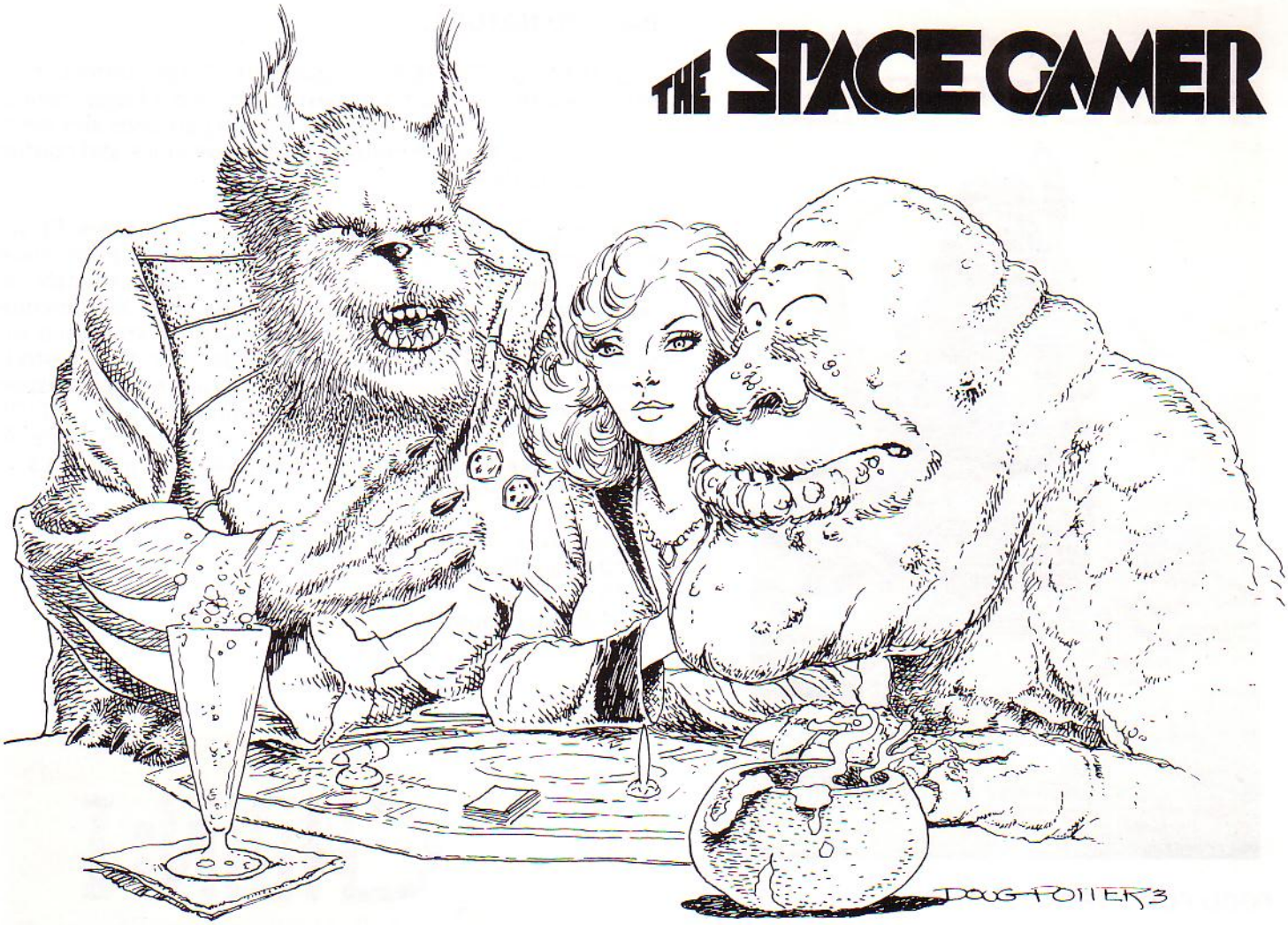


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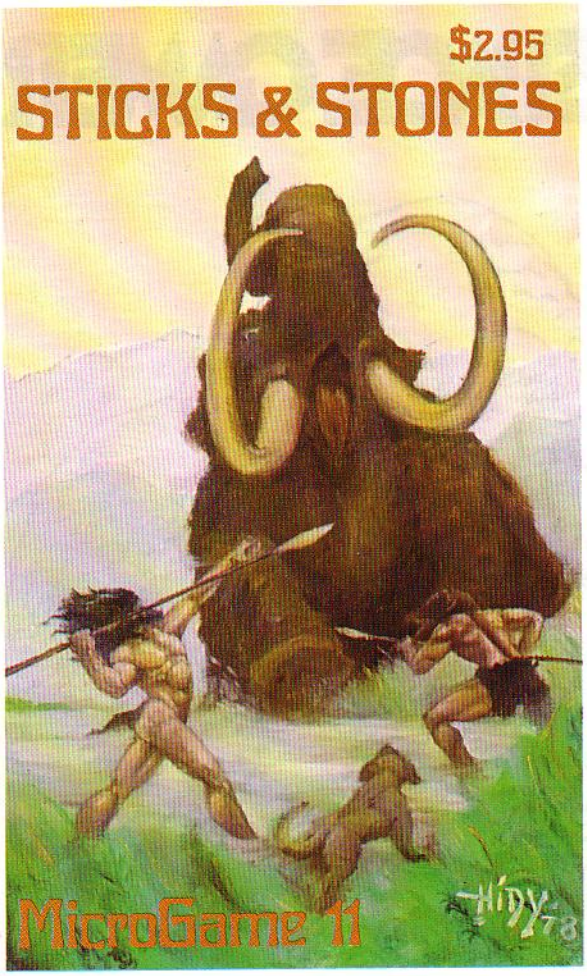


## BACK TO NATURE. . . . .

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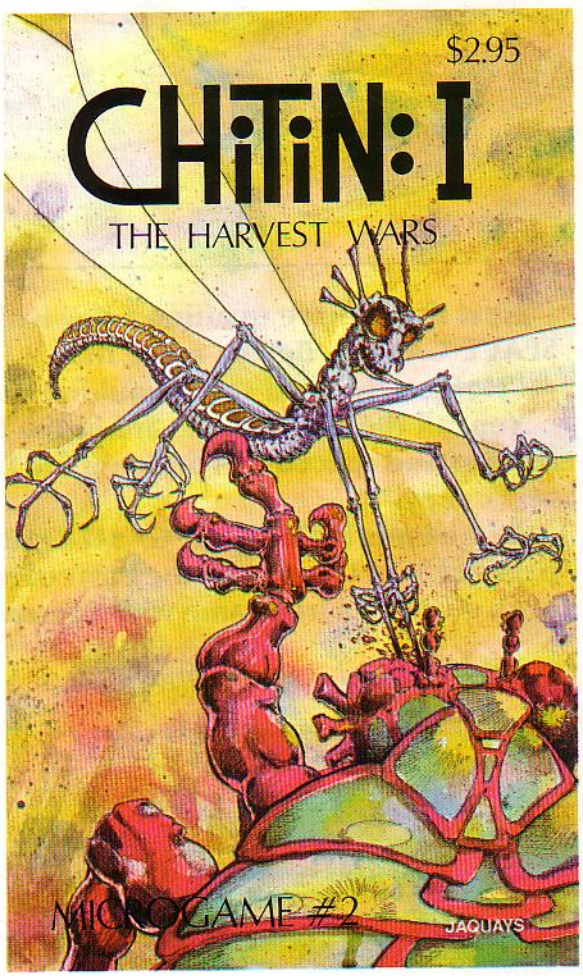


## FOOD FOR THE BUGS. . . . .

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